

Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg

Reference: R. Reutzel & Cooter (2008)

Writing in Teaching Children to

## After Questions

Read pp. 281-328.

Upper Saddle River, NJ  
Pearson.

- How is reading related to writing?
- How does writing develop?
- How is writing development evaluated?
- How is the writing process taught?
- How can we adapt writing instruction to meet the needs of all learners?
- What is a proven strategy for involving parents in writing instruction?

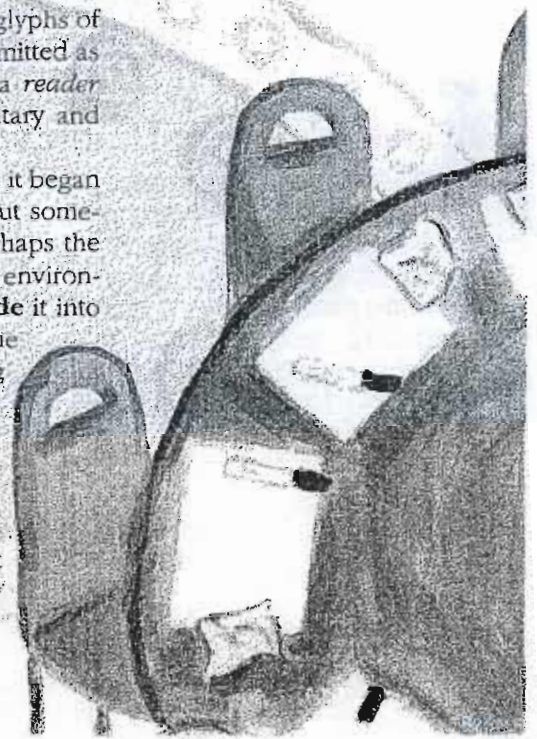
## Begins

Five-year-old Laura sat quietly on the living room couch next to her parents as they sat with a neighbor. In her hands were four unlined index cards and an old, unmarked pencil. After several minutes, she slipped down from the couch and quickly approached the visitor clutching one index card behind her back. Impulsively she thrust the card into the waiting hand of the visitor. He studied the marks she had made on the card. "Wow, Laura!" he exclaimed. "You are writing!" Laura's smile beamed from ear to ear. "I really wrote, didn't I?"

Since the earliest days of humanity, people have had a strong desire to share their thoughts in writing. The written word is a potential time machine where one's thoughts and experiences can be shared virtually forever. We see written time machines in the cave drawings of cave dwellers many millennia ago, in the Egyptian hieroglyphs of 3000 B.C.E., in the Declaration of Independence, or in an e-mail record submitted as evidence in a court of law. In all cases, writing is pointless without a reader to receive the message. Thus, writing and reading are complementary and essential processes of communication.

Writing surely must have been invented *before* reading. Perhaps it began like this: One of our forebears decided to record his thoughts about something important on a stone wall for another person's use. Perhaps the message had to do with a food source or a danger in the environment. The creator of the message had to somehow **encode** it into print—that is, generate a written symbol that represented the idea. When the intended recipient of the message came along later, he would need to be able to **decode** it, or translate the written symbols into language or thought.

As it happens, learning to write helps children become better readers (Tierney & Shanahan, 1996). A number of years ago, each of the authors of this text decided to leave college teaching and return to public schools as first grade teachers. It was the first time either of us had established writing as a key





part of our reading program. Of course, we had included writing in our previous curricula, but not the full writing process as described by early leaders in the field such as Donald Graves (1983) and Lucy Calkins (1986). In a word, this addition to our instructional programs was powerful! Our students learned to write with excitement and passion, and their reading development was greatly accelerated (Reutzel & Cooter, 1990). So, if you are wondering why we include a chapter on writing in a reading methods textbook . . . well, research and our own first-hand experience have convinced us that writing and reading are reciprocal processes that simply *must* be taught together (Shanahan, 2006).

## How Is Reading Related to Writing?

Reading and writing are often thought of as mirror images of each other (Reutzel & Cooter, 2007). Walter Loban (1964) once said that the relationship between reading and writing is "so striking to be beyond question" (p. 212). It happens that reading and writing share a number of traits or underlying processes (Tierney & Shanahan, 1996), but they also have some unique qualities as well. As Shanahan (2006) noted, they have somewhat different cognitive "footprints." Let's take a brief look at ways reading and writing are close cousins.

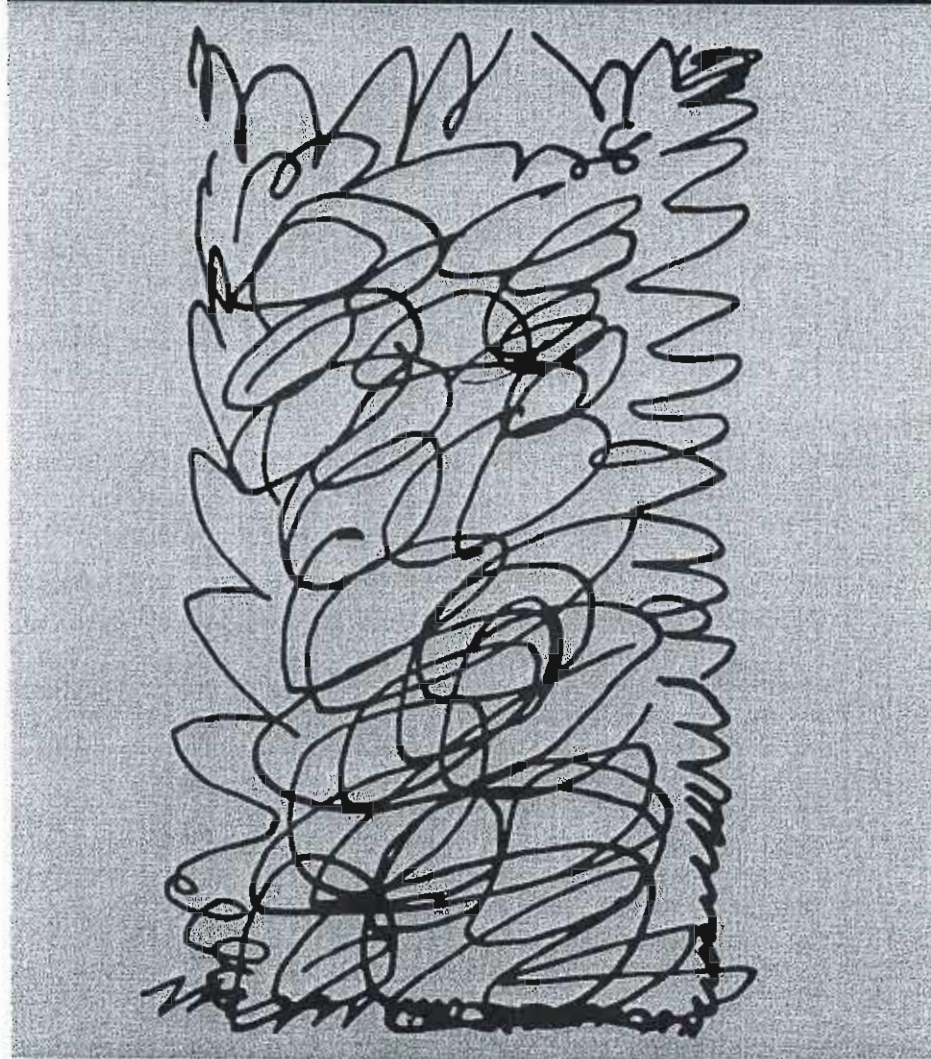
In the *Handbook of Writing Research*, Shanahan (2006) explains that " . . . reading and writing are dependent upon shared cognitive abilities (e.g., visual, phonological, and semantic systems or short- and long-term memory), and anything that improves these abilities may have implications for both reading and writing development. . . ." (p. 174). Shanahan's review of the research concluded that readers and writers rely on four common knowledge bases:

1. Content knowledge, because writing has to be about *something*.
2. Metaknowledge, which is knowing about the functions of reading and writing, that readers and writers interact, and that monitoring one's own meaning-making while writing or reading is critical. New learning often happens through examining and reexamining information from a variety of perspectives, and reading and writing provide alternate perspectives (Rijlaarsdam & van den Bergh, 2006; Shanahan, 2006). A person's culture, by the way, can have an impact—positive or negative—on how well the functions of reading and writing are understood. For example, a second language learner from an Asian country may not have the same understanding of how writing is understood in the United States compared to a native-born North American citizen.
3. Knowledge of specific components of written language that underlie reading and writing, such as phonemic (speech sounds) and orthographic (spelling) knowledge.
4. Procedural knowledge about how to access, use, and generate information during reading and writing (Mason, Herman, & Au, 1991). This includes an awareness of strategies intentionally used in reading and writing, such as predicting, questioning, and summarizing.

### Getting to Know English Learners

Writing, highly valued as a sign of an educated person in the West, is no less important in Asian countries, for example, yet, as in many other parts of the world, writing may serve different purposes for different groups of people. Chinese students, for example, learn to write using a complex symbol system that takes many, many years to learn fully.

Figure 8.1 Laura's Scribbles



### How Writing Develops

Young children discover early in life that writing is the sharing of ideas. In our opening vignette, Laura demonstrated her growing understanding that writing can be a tool for recording thoughts on paper to share with others. She came to this understanding without formal spelling and writing instruction. After carefully observing others in her environment, Laura risked acting like a skilled writer and tried out her hypothesis about how printed language functions.

Many of us have seen children attempting to solve the printed language puzzle through drawing and scribbling. One may be tempted to dismiss these early attempts at writing as cute, but certainly not *real* writing (see Figure 8.1). This judgment may be as misguided as concluding that a flower in its early stages of development is not truly a flower because it does not resemble a full-blown bloom.



Through careful study over a period of decades, researchers have discovered that young children pass through certain developmental stages in their writing and spelling similar to those discussed with respect to oral language and reading development. An understanding of these stages helps teachers recognize the roots of writing and spelling development and enables them to nurture the roots of scribbling and drawing into the flower of writing.

**Scribbling and Drawing Stage.** When young children first take a pencil or crayon in hand, they use this instrument to explore the vast empty space on a blank sheet of paper. In its earliest stages, children's writing is often referred to by adult observers as *scribbling* (Bear, Invernizzi, Templeton, & Johnston, 2000; Clay, 1987; Temple, Nathan, Burris, & Temple, 1993).

These random marks are the wellsprings of writing discovery. As shown in Figure 8.1, Laura's scribbles appear to be the result of acting on the paper just to see what happens, perhaps without any particular intent. Her scribbles do not demonstrate much of what adults normally consider to be conventional or even purposeful writing. In Figure 8.2, Laura's scribbles begin to reveal an exploration of alternative forms when compared to her previous markings. Circles, curved lines, and letterlike forms begin to appear as part of Laura's writing exploration.

Some time later, Laura's scribbles begin to look more and more like adult cursive writing. Note in Figure 8.3 that the marks have become linear, moving from left to right.

When questioned, Laura could tell what she meant by each of the scribbles reproduced in Figure 8.3. Unlike her marks in Figure 8.1, Laura's later scribbling represented her meaning in a more conventional way. Laura revealed that these later scribbles represented a "Christmas wish list." Often, letter-like writing or shapes, as

need to be  
detail oriented

**Figure 8.2** Laura's Scribbles as Exploration

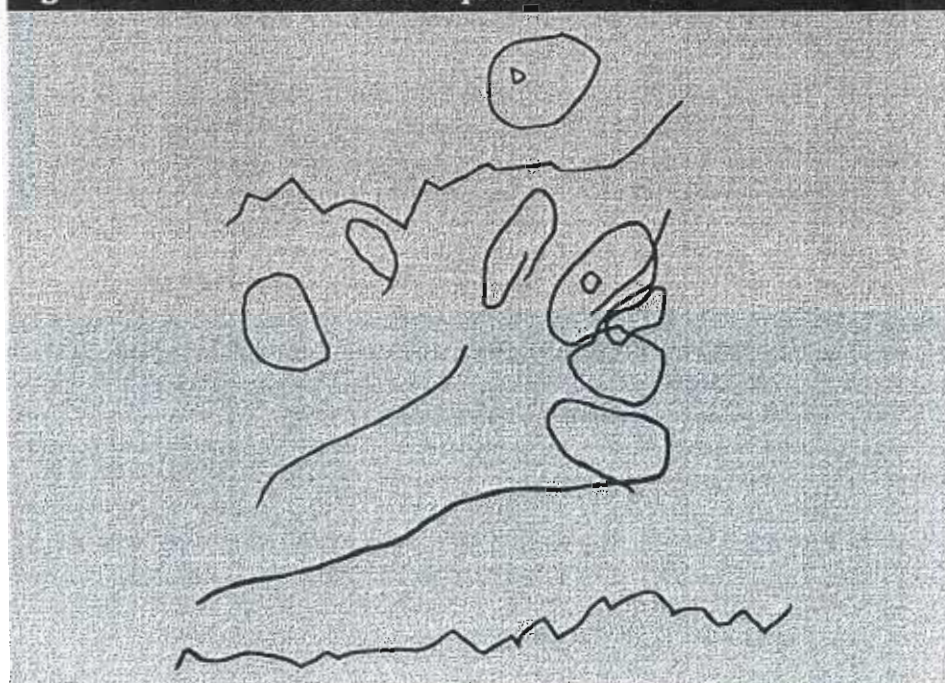
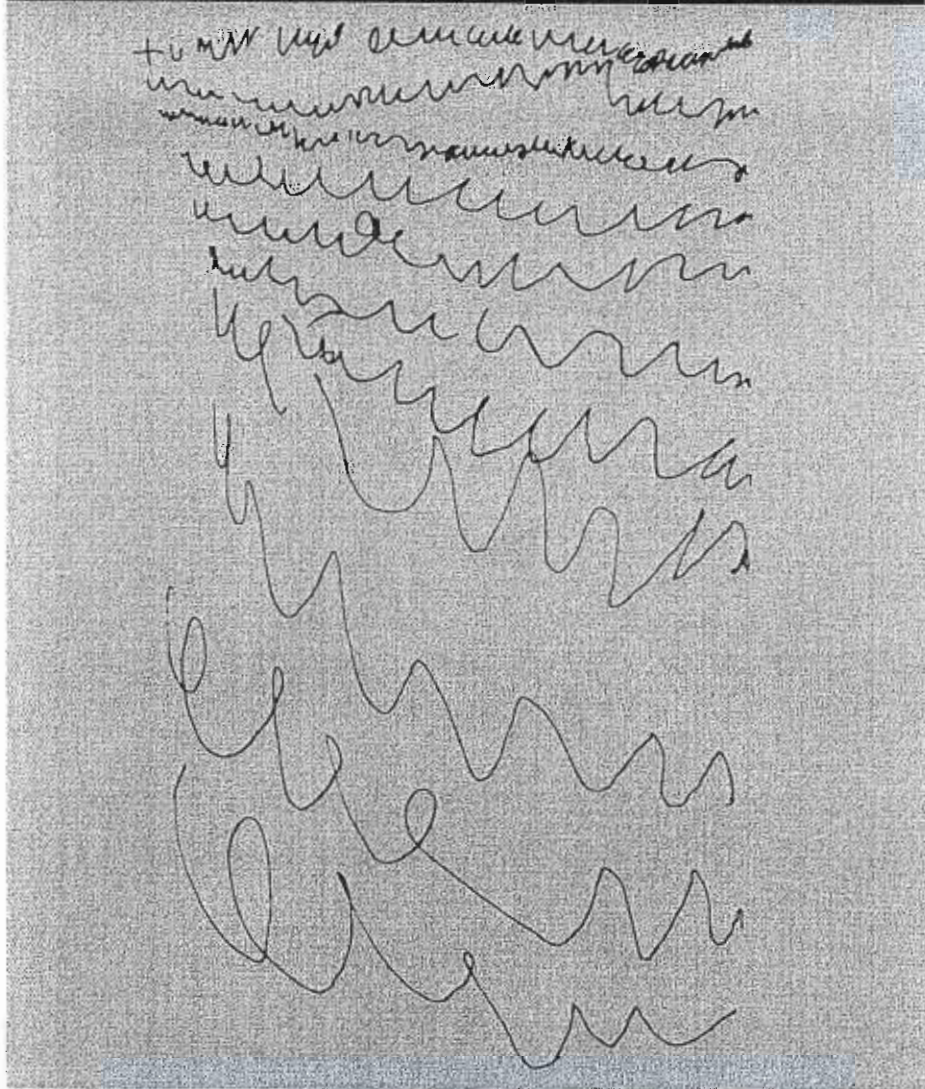


Figure 8.3 Laura's Scribble Cursive Writing: Christmas List



own in Laura's Christmas list, are used repeatedly in early writing attempts. Clay (1987) calls the tendency to reuse and repeat certain scribbles and drawings **recursive writing**. The purpose for recursive writing seems to be the need for comfort and familiarity as children prepare to move into the next levels of writing development.

Weeks later, Laura produced the writing found in Figure 8.4. Note in this example that she uses drawings to carry part of her intended message. In addition, directly above the head of Laura's drawing of a young girl, one can detect the emergence of letter-like forms etched in broken detail. When queried about the intent of these letter-like forms, Laura responded, "That says 'Laura!'" Evidently, Laura had discovered at this point in her development as a writer that drawings can supplement a message and that writing is different from drawing.



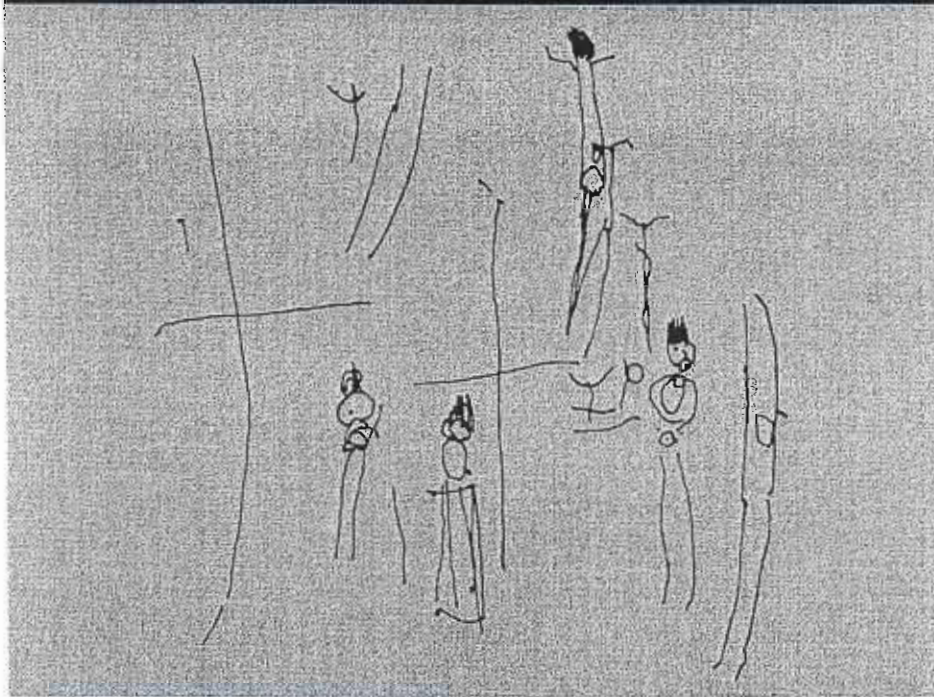
**Figure 8.4** Laura's Self-Portrait

In another example, Toby, a four-year-old, produced the writing found in Figure 8.5. Toby uses humanlike forms to represent members of his family in his thank-you letter. One sees the use of letter-like symbols randomly scattered about the page. Near the center, Toby signed his name. By looking carefully, one can see the upside-down letter *b* and what looks like a letter *y*, which Toby chose to represent his name. Thus, one can see that during this initial stage of writing development, Laura and Toby used scribbling, drawing, and disconnected letter-like forms to explore and record their meaning on paper. These children had discovered that writing can be used to communicate meaning, and that although drawing and writing are complementary processes, they are not the same.

Thompson  
bmk →

**Prephonemic Stage.** The next stage of writing and spelling development among young children is often called the **prephonemic stage** (Temple et al., 1993). At this stage, children begin to use real letters—usually capitals—to represent

Figure 8.5 Toby's Thank-You Letter



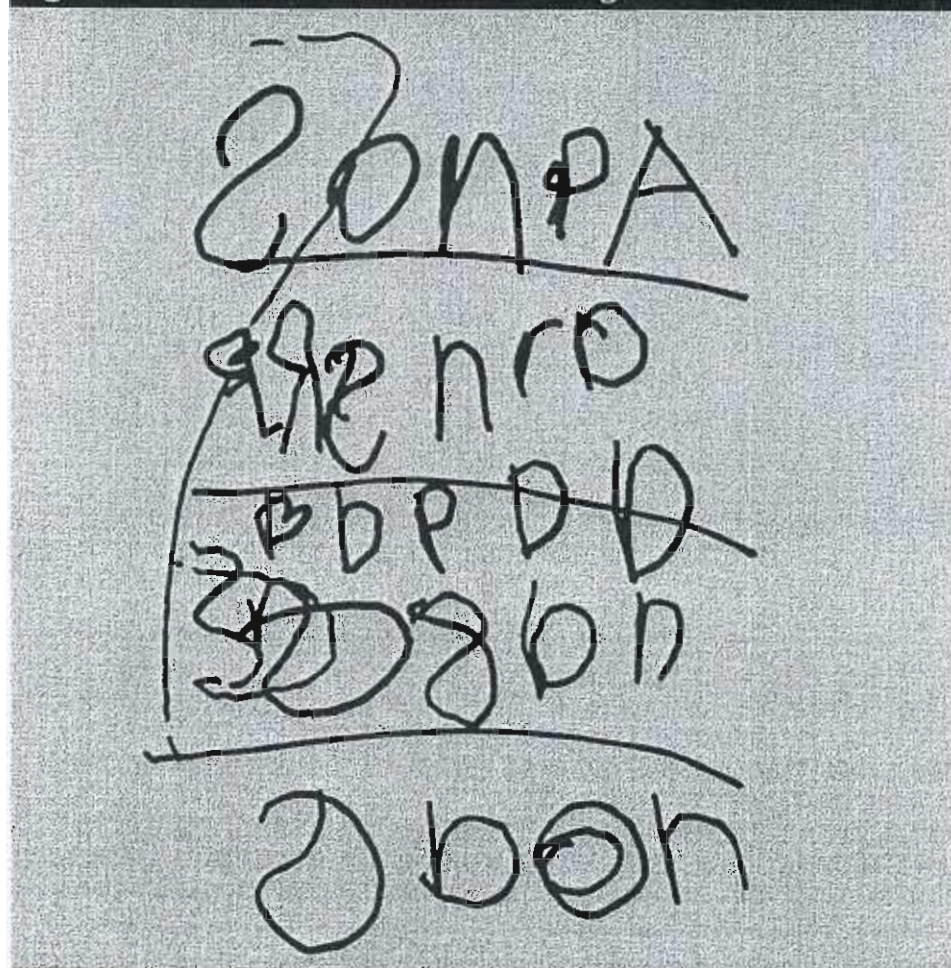
meaning. Letters do not represent their phonemic or sound values; rather, they are used as placeholders for meaning, representing anything from a syllable to an entire thought. Chaundra, a kindergartener, produced the writing in Figure 8.6. Note Chaundra's use of letters to represent meaning. Only by asking the child to explain the meaning can one readily discern that she used letters as meaning placeholders and not as representations of phonemic values.

Clay (1975) points out that children in the prephonemic stage of writing development will usually produce a string of letters and proudly display their work to a parent while asking, "What does this say?" or "What did I write?" In many families today, children do this with magnetic letters on refrigerator doors: they meticulously arrange a string of letters and then ask what they have written.

**Early Phonemic Stage.** During the next stage of writing development, the **early phonemic stage** (Temple et al., 1993), children begin to use letters—usually capitalized consonants—to represent words. Children at this stage of writing development have discovered that letters represent sound values. They write words represented by one or two consonant letters—usually the beginning or ending sounds of the word. In Figure 8.7, Samantha uses only consonants to represent the word *house* in her message.

Temple et al. (1993) suspect that the tendency for children in the early phonemic stage to represent a word with only one or two letters is the result of an inability to "hold words still in their minds" while they examine them for phonemes and match these to known letters (p. 101). Although this may be true, it is also possible that children at this stage are continuing to learn certain letters of the alphabet. It



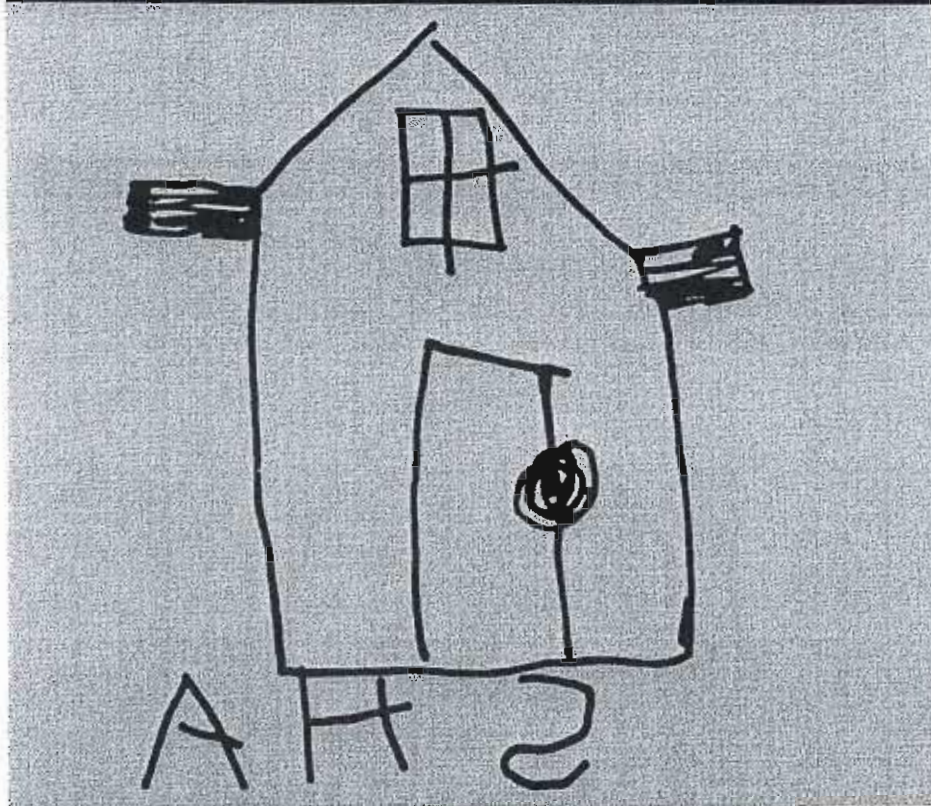


Not all students' first languages use the same alphabetic system as English; directionality (both horizontally and vertically) may also be different, causing English Learners' first attempts with writing English very challenging indeed!

x vowel sounds.



Figure 8.7 Samantha's Early Phonemic Writing: A House



Although Chris continues to use capital letters exclusively, vowels have begun appear in his writing. He has clearly discovered that words are made up of phonemes, both vowels and consonants; that these phonemes occur in an auditory sequence; and that these phonemes are properly represented in printed form from left to right. Although Chris does not yet read independently, he has made important discoveries about print that have nurtured his acquisition of reading, and his acquisition of reading will inform his acquisition of conventional spellings. With continued experiences in reading, Chris's writing will rapidly become more closely aligned with standard spelling and lead to the final stage of writing development, the transitional stage.

### Transitional Stage

Figures 8.9 and 8.10 illustrate the **transitional stage** of writing and spelling. Writing produced by youngsters in this stage looks like English, but words are a mixture of phonetic and conventional spellings. Typically, these writers neglect or overgeneralize certain spelling patterns. For example, the final silent *e* is sometimes omitted by these writers, familiar phonic elements are substituted for less familiar phonic elements, and double consonants are typically neglected.

"The Bear and the Horse" is a story summarization written in the transitional writing stage. View the edited example in the *Artifacts—Reading Methods/Writing* of the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)). Respond to the accompanying questions that can be printed or sent directly to your instructor.



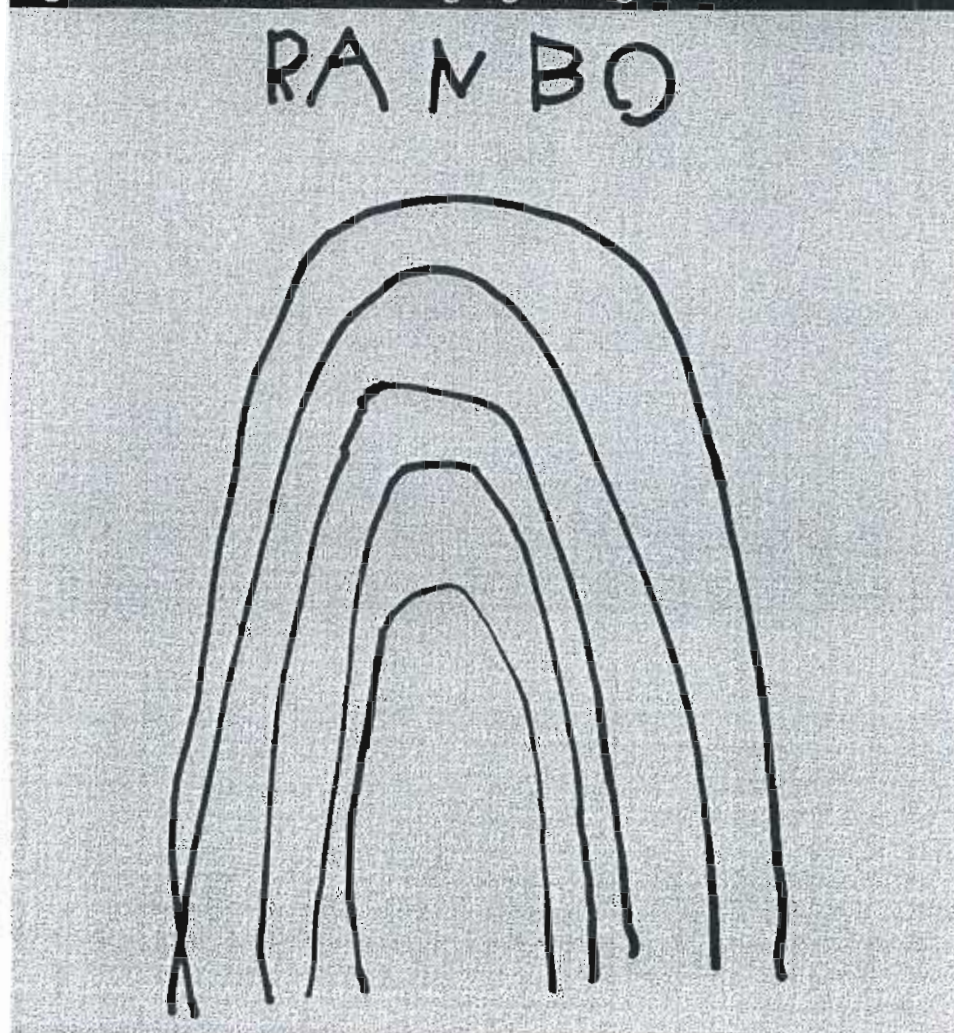
Think about conferencing with a student as you view "We Clided" in *Artifacts—Language Arts/Writing* in the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)). Discuss or respond to questions about feedback, modeling and instruction and share them with your instructor.



Why might we encourage this mix?



**Figure 8.8** Chris's Letter-Naming Stage Writing: Rainbow



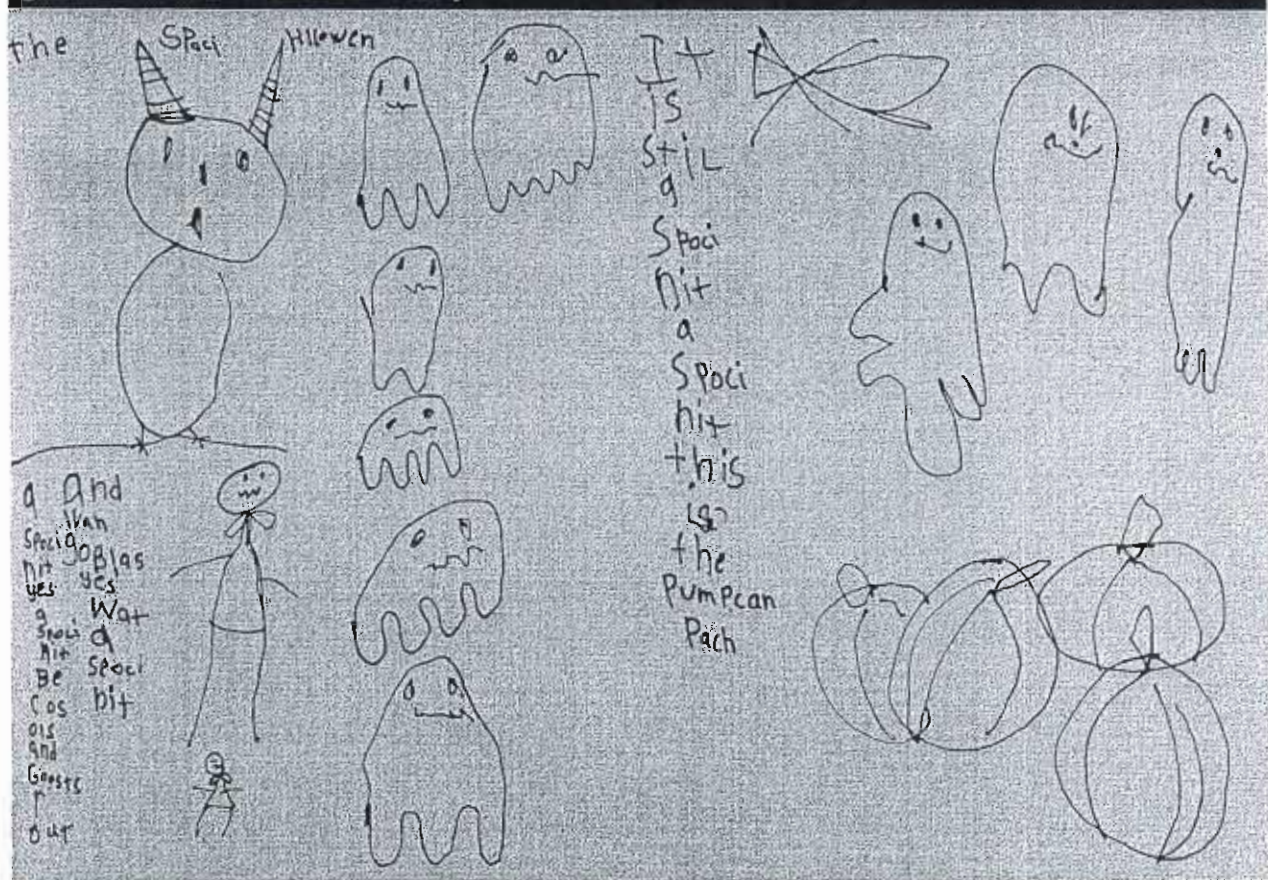
Devin, a first grader, wrote the story shown in Figure 8.9 during October. He demonstrates not only some of the substitutions and omissions mentioned previously, but also a top-to-bottom arrangement for his story.

Figure 8.10 shows a note that Candice wrote to her parents during the fall of her second-grade year. Notice the spellings of *parents*, *hurting*, *guys*, and *special*. Some of the spellings are unconventional, but the writing of this child looks very much like English and communicates the message well. Candice's writing is also a good example of the characteristics of transitional writing mentioned previously—the mix of standard and nonstandard spellings. Note also that transitional writers have discovered the use of other features of standard writing such as possessives, punctuation, and the standard letter- or note-writing format.

These examples demonstrate the progression of children's writing along a developmental continuum, originating with their early attempts to make meaning or



Figure 8.9 Devin's Halloween Story

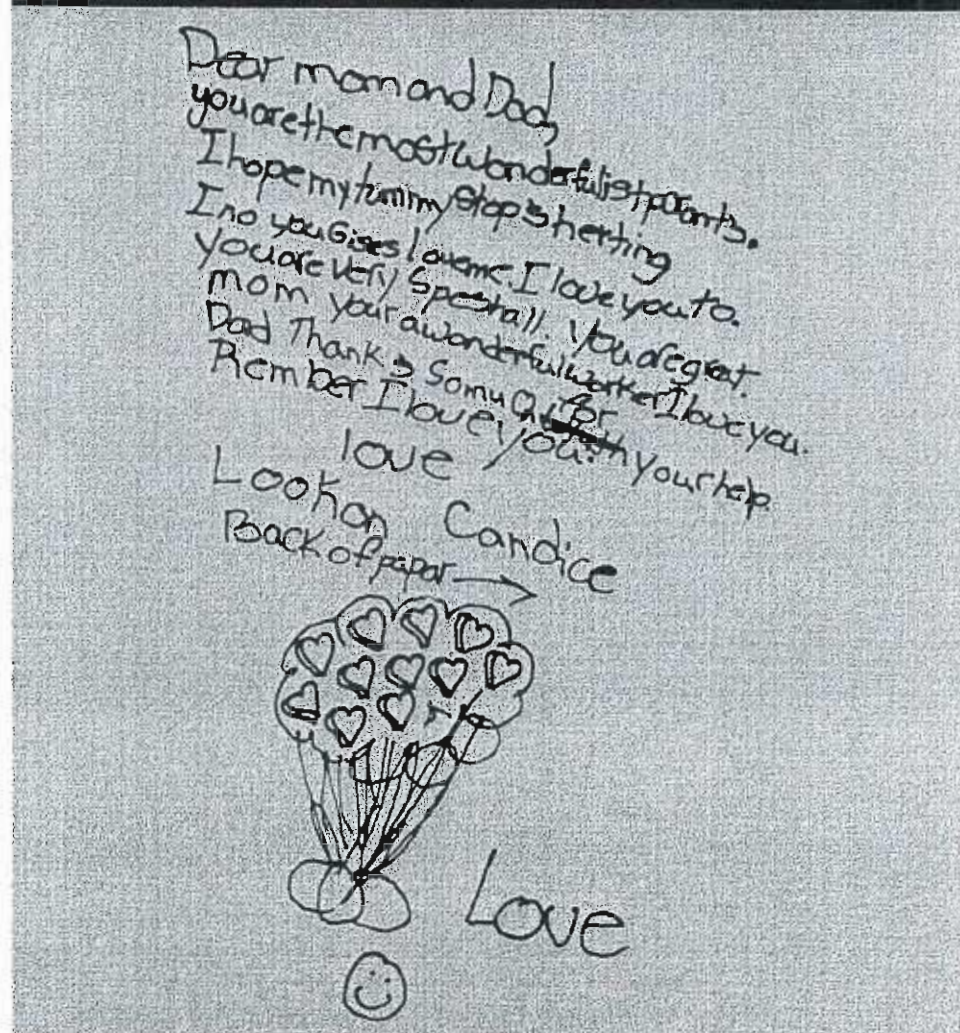


paper through scribbling and drawing to later refinements including the use of conventional spelling, grammar, and mechanics.

One note of caution should be sounded at this point: Although we may discuss oral language, writing, and reading development in terms of stages through which children pass, we want to emphasize to teachers that they should not use this information to try to hasten development or expect that children will—or even should—pass through each stage of development in the order described. Rather, teachers should use this information as a basis for understanding and supporting children's language learning by providing an environment rich in print and print use, gentle guidance, and enthusiastic encouragement as children struggle to solve the language and literacy puzzle. Just as children learned to speak within a nurturing home environment filled with supportive oral language users, they will develop into readers and writers within print-rich school and home environments filled with the support and encouragement of other competent and caring readers and writers. Figure 8.11 integrates information about oral language, reading, and writing development to show that these modes of language learning are developmentally similar.

key concept!  
not linear



**Figure 8.10** Candice's Note to Her Parents

### Unique Writing Patterns Used by Authors

Narrative texts (fiction) are organized in a story grammar scheme using such common elements as setting, theme, characterization, plot, and resolution. Expository text (nonfiction), however, is quite different: Its structure tends to be much more compact, detailed, and explanatory (Heilman et al., 2001). Five common expository text structures have been described (Meyer & Freedle, 1984; Williams, 2005): description, collection, causation, problem/solution, and comparison. When preparing to teach units in the content areas, teachers need to establish which expository text structures are used and organize for instruction accordingly. Here are the five expository text patterns identified earlier along with examples taken from content textbooks.

*Description:* Explains something about a topic or presents a characteristic or setting for a topic.



**Figure 8.11 Development Across the Language Modes of Oral Language, Reading, and Writing**

Oral Language Acquisition	Reading Development Stages	Writing Development Stages
Sounds, cooing, babbling	Picture-governed attempts: Story not formed	Scribbling and drawing
Holophrases and telegraphic speech	Picture-governed attempts: Story formed	Prephonemic
Vocabulary growth and negation language structures	Picture-governed attempts: Written language like—print not watched	Early phonemic
Vocabulary growth and interrogative structures	Print-governed attempts: Print watched	Letter-naming
Vocabulary growth, analogical substitutions, and passive language structures	Print-governed attempts: Strategies imbalanced	Transitional
Adult-like language structures, continuing vocabulary growth, and the ability to articulate all the sounds of the language	Print-governed attempts: Independent reading	Conventional

*Decimals* are another way to write fractions when the denominators are 10, 100, and so on.

(from *Merrill Mathematics (Grade 5)*, 1985, p. 247)

**Collection:** A number of descriptions (specifics, characteristics, or settings) presented together.

#### **Water Habitats**

Freshwater habitats are found in ponds, bogs, swamps, lakes, and rivers. Each freshwater habitat has special kinds of plants and animals that live there. Some plants and animals live in waters that are very cold. Others live in waters that are warm. Some plants and animals adapt to waters that flow fast. Others adapt to still water.

(from *Merrill Science (Grade 3)*, 1989, p. 226)

**Causation:** Elements grouped according to time sequence with a cause-effect relationship specified.

#### **America Enters the War**

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, World War II came to the United States. At 7:55 A.M. Japanese warplanes swooped through the clouds above Pearl Harbor. Pearl Harbor was the American naval base in the Hawaiian Islands. A deadly load of bombs was dropped on the American ships and airfield. It was a day, Roosevelt said, that would "live in infamy." *Infamy* (IN. fuh. mee) means "remembered for being evil."



The United States had been attacked. That meant war.

(from *The United States: Its History and Neighbors [Grade 5]*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985, p. 493)

**Problem/Solution:** Includes a relationship (between a problem and its possible cause(s)) and a set of solution possibilities, one of which can break the link between the problem and its cause.

#### **Agreement by Compromise (Events That Led to the Civil War)**

For a while there was an equal number of Southern and Northern states. That meant that there were just as many Senators in Congress from slave states as from free states. Neither had more votes in the Senate, so they usually reached agreement on new laws by compromise.

(from *The United States and the Other Americas [Grade 5]*, Macmillan, 1980, p. 190)

**Comparison:** Organizes factors on the basis of differences and similarities. Comparison does not contain elements of sequence or causality.

#### **Segregation**

Segregation laws said that blacks had to live separate, or apart, from whites. Like whites, during segregation blacks had their own parks, hospitals, and swimming pools. Theaters, buses, and trains were segregated.

Many people said that the segregation laws were unfair. But in 1896, the Supreme Court ruled segregation legal if the separate facilities for blacks were equal to those for whites. "Separate but equal" became the law in many parts of the country.

But separate was not equal. . . . One of the most serious problems was education. Black parents felt that their students were not receiving an equal education in segregated schools. Sometimes the segregated schools had teachers who were not as well educated as teachers in the white schools. Textbooks were often very old and out-of-date, if they had any books at all. But in many of the white schools the books were the newest ones. Without a good education, the blacks argued, their students would not be able to get good jobs as adults.

Finally in 1954, the Supreme Court changed the law.

(Adapted from *The American People [Grade 6]*, American Book Company, 1982, p. 364)

## **What Are the Writing Skills to Be Learned at Each Grade Level (K–6)?**

Burns, Griffin, and Snow (1999), in their book *Starting Out Right*, summarize the skills to be learned in writing for grades K through 3 according to scientific research. These should be viewed as "end-of-year benchmark skills," or targets for every child to attain by the end of the school year in order to be on track in his or her development.

Pre-  
New



*Kindergarten*

- Writes uppercase and lowercase letters
- Writes own name
- Uses invented spellings to express meaning
- Uses invented spellings to write teacher-dictated words
- Is becoming aware of the differences between kid writing and conventional writing

*First Grade*

- Spells three- and four-letter short vowel words conventionally
- Writes texts for others to read
- Writes independently using a mix of invented and conventional spellings
- Uses basic or terminal punctuation (periods, question marks, exclamation points) and capitalization
- Produces a variety of types of compositions and texts (e.g., stories, information texts, poems, notes, recipes, journal entries)

*Second Grade*

- Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing
- Represents the complete sound of the word when spelling independently (invented spellings)
- Writes using formal language patterns rather than oral language patterns at appropriate places in own writing
- Makes reasonable judgments about what to include in own writing
- Can discuss productively ways to improve own writing and that of others
- Is able to use, with assistance, conferencing, revision, and editing processes to improve the quality of own writing
- Writes informative, well-structured reports with assistance
- Attends to spelling, mechanics, and presentation for final products
- Produces a variety of types of compositions

*Third Grade*

- Begins to incorporate literary words, language patterns, figures of speech, and elaborate descriptions in own writing
- Correctly spells previously studied words and spelling patterns in own writing
- Combines information from multiple sources in writing reports
- Productively discusses ways to clarify own writing and that of others
- Uses conferencing, revision, and editing processes to improve the quality of own writing
- Independently reviews work for spelling, mechanics, and presentation
- Produces a variety of written work in various formats including multimedia forms

Source: Adapted from pp. 85, 107, 118–119 of *Starting Out Right: A Guide to Promoting Children's Reading Success* by the National Research Council. Copyright 1999 by the National Academy of Science. Washington, D.C.: National Academies Press. Used with permission.

Teachers in grades 4–6 must also have a clear understanding of the writing skills expected of normally developing students. In this section, we provide you with our adaptation of the grade-level goals and accompanying performance objectives developed by the state of California. Because they are founded on evidence-based reading research, the California standards essentially mirror those developed by the other states (see Figure 8.12).

may be  
more  
familiar  
push from  
NCAB



**Figure 8.12** Writing Standards for Grades 4–6

**STANDARD 1: WRITING STRATEGIES\***

**\*Coding System**

First numeral = Grade level expectation

Second numeral = Standard

Third numeral = Skill number

*Example:* 5.2.3 = Fifth grade expectation, Standard 2 (Writing Applications), Skill #3 (Write research reports about important ideas, issues, or events. . .)

**Standards 1: Grades 4–6**

**Grade 4:** Students write clear, coherent sentences and paragraphs that develop a central idea. Their writing shows they consider the audience and purpose. Students progress through the stages of the writing process (e.g., prewriting, drafting, revising, editing successive versions).

**Grade 5:** Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits the students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

**Grade 6:** Students write clear, coherent, and focused essays. The writing exhibits students' awareness of the audience and purpose. Essays contain formal introductions, supporting evidence, and conclusions. Students progress through the stages of the writing process as needed.

**Performance Objectives: Grades 4–6**

**Organization and Focus**

- 4.1.1 Select a focus, an organizational structure, and a point of view based upon purpose, audience, length, and format requirements.
- 4.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph compositions:
  - a. Provide an introductory paragraph.
  - b. Establish and support a central idea with a topic sentence at or near the beginning of the first paragraph.
  - c. Include supporting paragraphs with simple facts, details, and explanations.
  - d. Conclude with a paragraph that summarizes the points.
  - e. Use correct indentation.
- 4.1.3 Use traditional structures for conveying information (e.g., chronological order, cause and effect, similarity and difference, and posing and answering a question).
- 5.1.1 Create multiple-paragraph narrative compositions:
  - a. Establish and develop a situation or plot.
  - b. Describe the setting.
  - c. Present an ending.
- 5.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions:
  - a. Establish a topic, important ideas, or events in sequence or chronological order.
  - b. Provide details and transitional expressions that link one paragraph to another in a clear line of thought.
  - c. Offer a concluding paragraph that summarizes important ideas and details.
- 6.1.1 Choose the form of writing (e.g., personal letter, letter to the editor, review, poem, report, narrative) that best suits the intended purpose.
- 6.1.2 Create multiple-paragraph expository compositions:
  - a. Engage the interest of the reader and state a clear purpose.
  - b. Develop the topic with supporting details and precise verbs, nouns, and adjectives to paint a visual image in the mind of the reader.
  - c. Conclude with a detailed summary linked to the purpose of the composition.



Figure 8.12 (Continued)

- 6.1.3 Use a variety of effective and coherent organizational patterns, including comparison and contrast, organization by categories, and arrangement by spatial order, order of importance, or climactic order.
- Penmanship*
- 4.1.4 Write fluidly and legibly in cursive or joined italic.
- Research and Technology*
- 4.1.5 Quote or paraphrase information sources, citing them appropriately.
- 4.1.6 Locate information in reference texts by using organizational features (e.g., prefaces, appendixes).
- 4.1.7 Use various reference materials (e.g., dictionary, thesaurus, card catalog, encyclopedia, online information) as an aid to writing.
- 4.1.8 Understand the organization of almanacs, newspapers, and periodicals and how to use those print materials.
- 4.1.9 Demonstrate basic keyboarding skills and familiarity with computer terminology (e.g., cursor, software, memory, disk drive, hard drive).
- 5.1.3 Use organizational features of printed text (e.g., citations, end notes, bibliographic references) to locate relevant information.
- 5.1.4 Create simple documents by using electronic media and employing organizational features (e.g., passwords, entry and pull-down menus, word searches, the thesaurus, spell checks).
- 5.1.5 Use a thesaurus to identify alternative word choices and meanings.
- 6.1.4 Use organizational features of electronic text (e.g., bulletin boards, databases, keyword searches, e-mail addresses) to locate information.
- 6.1.5 Compose documents with appropriate formatting by using word-processing skills and principles of design (e.g., margins, tabs, spacing, columns, page orientation).
- Evaluation and Revision*
- 4.1.10 Edit and revise selected drafts to improve coherence and progression by adding, deleting, consolidating, and rearranging text.
- 5.1.6 Edit and revise manuscripts to improve the meaning and focus of writing by adding, deleting, consolidating, clarifying, and rearranging words and sentences.
- 6.1.6 Revise writing to improve the organization and consistency of ideas within and between paragraphs.

## **STANDARD 2: WRITING APPLICATIONS: GENRES AND THEIR CHARACTERISTICS**

### ***Standard 2: Grades 4–6***

**Grade 4:** Students write compositions that describe and explain familiar objects, events, and experiences. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the drafting, research, and organizational strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

**Grade 5:** Students write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive texts of at least 500 to 700 words in each genre. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

**Grade 6:** Students write narrative, expository, persuasive, and descriptive texts of at least 500 to 700 words in each genre. Student writing demonstrates a command of standard American English and the research, organizational, and drafting strategies outlined in Writing Standard 1.0.

*Using the outline in Writing Standard 1.0, students:*

#### **Write Narratives**

- 4.2.1 *Write narratives:*
  - a. Relate ideas, observations, or recollections of an event or experience.
  - b. Provide a context to enable the reader to imagine the world of the event or experience.

(continued)



Figure 8.12 (Continued)

- c. Use concrete sensory details.
- d. Provide insight into why the selected event or experience is memorable.
- 5.2.1 Write narratives:
  - a. Establish a plot, point of view, setting, and conflict.
  - b. Show, rather than tell, the events of the story.
- 6.2.1 Write narratives:
  - a. Establish and develop a plot and setting and present a point of view that is appropriate to the stories.
  - b. Include sensory details and concrete language to develop plot and character.
  - c. Use a range of narrative devices (e.g., dialogue, suspense).
- Write Responses to Literature*
- 4.2.2 Write responses to literature:
  - a. Demonstrate an understanding of the literary work.
  - b. Support judgments through references to both the text and prior knowledge.
- 5.2.2 Write responses to literature:
  - a. Demonstrate an understanding of a literary work.
  - b. Support judgments through references to the text and to prior knowledge.
  - c. Develop interpretations that exhibit careful reading and understanding.
- 6.2.4 Write responses to literature:
  - a. Develop an interpretation exhibiting careful reading, understanding, and insight.
  - b. Organize the interpretation around several clear ideas, premises, or images.
  - c. Develop and justify the interpretation through sustained use of examples and textual evidence.
- Write Information/Research Reports*
- 4.2.3 Write information reports:
  - a. Frame a central question about an issue or situation.
  - b. Include facts and details for focus.
  - c. Draw from more than one source of information (e.g., speakers, books, newspapers, other media sources).
- 4.2.4 Write summaries that contain the main ideas of the reading selection and the most significant details.
- 5.2.3 Write research reports about important ideas, issues, or events by using the following guidelines:
  - a. Frame questions that direct the investigation.
  - b. Establish a controlling idea or topic.
  - c. Develop the topic with simple facts, details, examples, and explanations.
- 6.2.3 Write research reports:
  - a. Pose relevant questions with a scope narrow enough to be thoroughly covered.
  - b. Support the main idea or ideas with facts, details, examples, and explanations from multiple authoritative sources (e.g., speakers, periodicals, online information searches).
  - c. Include a bibliography.
- Write Persuasive Letters or Compositions*
- 5.2.4 Write persuasive letters or compositions:
  - a. State a clear position in support of a proposal.
  - b. Support a position with relevant evidence.
  - c. Follow a simple organizational pattern.
  - d. Address reader concerns.
- 6.2.2 Write expository compositions (e.g., description, explanation, comparison and contrast, problem and solution):
  - a. State the thesis or purpose.
  - b. Explain the situation.
  - c. Follow an organizational pattern appropriate to the type of composition.
  - d. Offer persuasive evidence to validate arguments and conclusions as needed.



Figure 8.12 (Continued)

- 6.2.5 Write persuasive compositions:
  - a. State a clear position on a proposition or proposal.
  - b. Support the position with organized and relevant evidence.
  - c. Anticipate and address reader concerns and counterarguments.

**STANDARD 3: WRITTEN AND ORAL ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS****Standard 3: Grades 4–6**

**Grade 4–6:** Students write and speak with a command of standard English conventions appropriate to this grade level.

**Performance Objectives: Grades 4–6****Sentence Structure**

- 4.3.1 Use simple and compound sentences in writing and speaking.
- 4.3.2 Combine short, related sentences with appositives, participial phrases, adjectives, adverbs, and prepositional phrases.
- 5.3.1 Identify and correctly use prepositional phrases, appositives, and independent and dependent clauses; use transitions and conjunctions to connect ideas.
- 6.3.1 Use simple, compound, and compound-complex sentences; use effective coordination and subordination of ideas to express complete thoughts.

**Grammar**

- 4.3.3 Identify and use regular and irregular verbs, adverbs, prepositions, and coordinating conjunctions in writing and speaking.
- 5.3.2 Identify and correctly use verbs that are often misused (e.g., *lie/lay*, *sit/set*, *rise/raise*), modifiers, and pronouns.
- 6.3.2 Identify and properly use indefinite pronouns and present perfect, past perfect, and future perfect verb tenses; ensure that verbs agree with compound subjects.

**Punctuation**

- 4.3.4 Use parentheses, commas in direct quotations, and apostrophes in the possessive case of nouns and in contractions.
- 4.3.5 Use underlining, quotation marks, or italics to identify titles of documents.
- 5.3.3 Use a colon to separate hours and minutes and to introduce a list; use quotation marks around the exact words of a speaker and titles of poems, songs, short stories, and so forth.
- 6.3.3 Use colons after the salutation in business letters, semicolons to connect independent clauses, and commas when linking two clauses with a conjunction in compound sentences.

**Capitalization**

- 4.3.6 Capitalize names of magazines, newspapers, works of art, musical compositions, organizations, and the first word in quotations when appropriate.
- 5.3.4 Use correct capitalization.
- 6.3.4 Use correct capitalization.

**Spelling**

- 4.3.7 Spell correctly roots, inflections, suffixes and prefixes, and syllable constructions.
- 5.3.5 Spell roots, suffixes, prefixes, contractions, and syllable constructions correctly.
- 6.3.5 Spell frequently misspelled words correctly.

Source: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/standards/>

Adapted from the California Department of Education English Language Arts Content Standards

## How Is Writing Development Evaluated?

Two writing assessment perspectives are commonly thought of when analyzing student compositions (Moskal, 2003): *analytic scoring rubrics* and *holistic scoring rubrics*. A third assessment model that essentially combines holistic and analytic methods uses *trait rubrics* (Shermis et al., 2006). Each of these methods will be briefly described in this section. First, we take a look at some general guidelines for constructing writing rubrics.

### Rubrics and Writing Assessment: Some Things to Remember

Moskal (2003) offers useful advice to teachers about implementing writing rubrics in their classrooms. This advice applies to all three types of writing assessment we will discuss in this chapter.

First, when developing scoring rubrics for writing, teachers should be certain that the assessment criteria are aligned with state requirements and objectives. Many states have their own rubrics and timelines for writing assessment, and students should be given ample opportunities to practice the kinds of writing on which they will be evaluated. The state of Florida has a very helpful Web site for teachers that provides this information (see the "Sunshine State Standards" online at <http://www.firn.edu/doel/menu/ss.htm>).

Second, rubric criteria should be (1) expressed in terms of observable behaviors, (2) written in specific, clear, and meaningful language, and (3) designate clear distinctions between scoring levels. Third, rubric criteria should be explained to students prior to the writing experience. These criteria should be communicated to students in language that is easy for them to understand.

When conducting a writing assessment, teachers should ensure that students have easy access to appropriate writing tools (e.g. updated dictionaries, thesaurus, ample writing materials, computer access, etc.) that support the completion of assessment activities. Fourth, the rubric criteria should be fair and free from bias.

### Analytic Scoring Rubrics

**Analytic scoring rubrics** divide writing performance into separate components. Each component is evaluated using a separate scale. The "Big Five" writing traits that are most often evaluated (Shermis et al., 2006) are:

- content
- creativity
- style
- mechanics
- organization

Because only one of the "Big Five" traits is examined in the analytical model of writing assessment, all that is required in the simplest kind of analytic scoring rubric is a place for the student's name, date, the specified trait, and a numerical scale (usually 1 to 5) for rating student performance. In group settings, we recommend that teachers read all student compositions once without grading to get a feel for the range of development in the class before assigning numerical values to each paper.

Figure 8.13 shows an example of a simple analytic scoring rubric for writing mechanics that have been studied in grade 4. This example uses criteria from *Tinkertoy Writing: A Systematic Approach for Grades K-5* (K. S. Cooter, 2006).

need to be careful it  
# 13  
draft vs. final

need to be  
careful -  
what descriptors  
it brings out  
subjectivity



Figure 8.13 A Grade 4 End-of-Year Analytic Scoring Rubric: Mechanics

Name _____					
Date _____					
<b>Trait: Mechanics of Writing</b>					
1. Three paragraphs with 12–15 sentences	1	2	3	4	5
2. Included 4Ws and an H in composition	1	2	3	4	5
3. Accurate spelling throughout	1	2	3	4	5
4. Completed composition in 30 minutes	1	2	3	4	5

### Holistic Scoring Rubrics

**Holistic scoring rubrics** use a single scale to evaluate the larger writing process (Moskal, 2003). Put another way, holistic scoring has teachers evaluate a piece of writing for its overall quality (i.e., all of the traits that make up the writing task are evaluated in combination). This method is sometimes called **focused holistic scoring**, and teachers are encouraged not to become overly concerned with any one aspect of writing but to look at the composition as a whole.

Many states offer holistic scoring rubrics for teachers to use in preparing their students for high-stakes testing (i.e., testing linked to the *No Child Left Behind* federal legislation). Figure 8.14 features the rubric offered to Florida teachers for holistic scoring.

The Florida Department of Education also offers on its Web site descriptors for specific writing scores to assist in further interpreting the holistic scoring rubric (see Figure 8.15). We offer these as exemplars of interpretations of levels of achievement that align with numerical scores on the rubric.

### The Six-Trait Model for Writing Assessment

In 1983, the Beaverton Oregon school district sought a means of assessing student writing that could lead to more effective writing instruction. The district examined research conducted by Paul Diederich (1974) featured in his book *Measuring Growth in English*. Diederich had assembled a group of writers, editors, attorneys, business executives, and English, natural science, and social science teachers and asked them to read student essays and rank order them into three groups: effective,

## Video Classroom

Visit a 4th grade classroom working on voice in writing.

A mini-lesson on "Voice" in a 4th grade classroom can be viewed on the CD that accompanies this text. Select a mini-lesson on "Voice" in the *Writing Workshop 4th*.

- During the clip, think about why a teacher would select this topic for a meaningful lesson.
- How are the examples powerful for helping the children understand the concept of "voice"?
- Children demonstrate that they understand the concept of voice. How?






Figure 8.14 Example of a Holistic Scoring Rubric

**6 Points**

The writing is focused, purposeful, and reflects insight into the writing situation. The paper conveys a sense of completeness and wholeness with adherence to the main idea, and its organizational pattern provides for a logical progression of ideas. The support is substantial, specific, relevant, concrete, and/or illustrative. The paper demonstrates a commitment to and an involvement with the subject, clarity in presentation of ideas, and may use creative writing strategies appropriate to the purpose of the paper. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language (word choice) with freshness of expression. Sentence structure is varied, and sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. Few, if any, convention errors occur in mechanics, usage, and punctuation.

**5 Points**

The writing focuses on the topic, and its organizational pattern provides for a progression of ideas, although some lapses may occur. The paper conveys a sense of completeness or wholeness. The support is ample. The writing demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. There is variation in sentence structure, and, with rare exceptions, sentences are complete except when fragments are used purposefully. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

**4 Points**

The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern is apparent, although some lapses may occur. The paper exhibits some sense of completeness or wholeness. The support, including word choice, is adequate, although development may be uneven. There is little variation in sentence structure, and most sentences are complete. The paper generally follows the conventions of mechanics, usage, and spelling.

**3 Points**

The writing is generally focused on the topic but may include extraneous or loosely related material. An organizational pattern has been attempted, but the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Some support is included, but development is erratic. Word choice is adequate but may be limited, predictable, or occasionally vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure. Knowledge of the conventions of mechanics and usage is usually demonstrated, and commonly used words are usually spelled correctly.

**2 Points**

The writing is related to the topic but include extraneous or loosely related material. Little evidence of an organizational pattern may be demonstrated, and the paper may lack a sense of completeness or wholeness. Development of support is inadequate or illogical. Word choice is limited, inappropriate or vague. There is little, if any, variation in sentence structure, and gross errors in sentence structure may occur. Errors in basic conventions of mechanics and usage may occur, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

**1 Point**

The writing may only minimally address the topic. The paper is a fragmentary or incoherent listing of related ideas or sentences or both. Little, if any, development of support or an organizational pattern or both is apparent. Limited or inappropriate word choice may obscure meaning. Gross errors in sentence structure and usage may impede communication. Frequent and blatant errors may occur in the basic conventions of mechanics and usage, and commonly used words may be misspelled.

**Unscorable**

The paper is unscorable because

- the response is not related to what the prompt requested the student to do.
- the response is simply a rewording of the prompt.
- the response is a copy of a published work.
- the student refused to write.
- the response is illegible.
- the response is incomprehensible (words are arranged in such a way that no meaning is conveyed).
- the response contains an insufficient amount of writing to determine if the student was attempting to address the prompt.
- the writing folder is blank.



**Figure 8.15** Description of Writing Scores for a Holistic Rubric (Florida)

For the Florida Writing Assessment, students are given 45 minutes to read their assigned topic, plan what to write, and then write their responses. The descriptions of eleven possible scores from 6.0–1.0 are given below.

**Score 6.0:**

The writing focuses on the topic, is logically organized, and includes ample development of supporting ideas or examples. It demonstrates a mature command of language, including precision in word choice. Sentences vary in structure. Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are generally correct.

**Score 5.5:**

The writing was given a 5 by one reader and 6 by the other reader.

**Score 5.0:**

The writing focuses on the topic with adequate development of supporting ideas or examples. It has an organizational pattern, though lapses may occur. Word choice is adequate. Sentences vary in structure. Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are generally correct.

**Score 4.5:**

The writing was given a 4 by one reader and a 5 by the other reader.

**Score 4.0:**

The writing focuses on the topic, though it may contain extraneous information. An organizational pattern is evident, but lapses may occur. Some supporting ideas contain specifics and details, but others are not developed. Word choice is adequate. Sentences vary somewhat in structure, though many are simple. Punctuation and capitalization are sometimes incorrect, but most commonly used words are spelled correctly.

**Score 3.5:**

The writing was given a 3 by one reader and a 4 by the other reader.

**Score 3.0:**

The writing generally focuses on the topic, though it may contain extraneous information. An organizational pattern has been attempted, but lapses may occur. Some of the supporting ideas or examples may not be developed. Word choice is adequate. Sentences vary somewhat in structure, though many are simple. Punctuation and capitalization are sometimes incorrect, but most commonly used words are spelled correctly.

**Score 2.5:**

The writing was given a 2 by one reader and a 3 by the other reader.

**Score 2.0:**

The writing may be slightly related to the topic or offer little relevant information and few supporting ideas or examples. There is little evidence of an organizational pattern. Word choice may be limited or immature. Sentences may be limited to simple constructions. Frequent errors may occur in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.

**Score 1.5:**

The writing was given a 1 by one reader and a 2 by the other reader.

**Score 1.0:**

The writing may only minimally address the topic because there is little or no development of supporting ideas or examples. No organizational pattern is evident. Ideas are provided through lists, and word choice is limited or immature. Unrelated information may be included. Frequent errors in punctuation, capitalization, and spelling may impede communication.

Source: Florida Writing Assessment Program—FLORIDA WRITES! (<http://www.firn.edu/doe/sas/fwfwapscor.htm>). "Description of Writing Scores for a Holistic Rubric" appears by permission of the Florida Department of Education, Assessment and School Performance Office, Tallahassee, Florida 32399-0400.

somewhat effective, and problematic. The group was also asked to discuss why they had ranked the papers as they had. Interestingly, Diederich found that the various members of the group described virtually the same qualities in the writing samples, including ideas and content, organizational structure, voice, and mechanics.

Beaverton teachers decided to repeat Diederich's study with a group of 17 teachers and a writing consultant. They read, rank ordered, and took notes on hundreds



of student papers and found that they largely agreed with Diederich's conclusions. The Beaverton teachers' notes were eventually condensed into a six-trait scoring guide. This six-trait model was adopted by the Oregon Department of Education for use in its statewide writing assessment. The ODE continued to develop and refine the six-trait scoring guide, which has become quite popular in school districts across the United States. Oregon currently uses a six-point scale for measuring performance on each writing trait. In the next section, we describe the six traits and scoring guidelines used by the ODE.

**Describing the Six Traits of Writing.** Here is a brief description of the six traits for scoring student writing samples drawn from the Oregon Department of Education's Web site at [www.ode.state.or.us](http://www.ode.state.or.us). The ODE criteria for evaluating the traits are also included.

1. **Ideas and content.** This trait refers to the writer's main ideas, purpose for writing, and supporting details. It focuses on how well the writer communicates and supports his or her ideas through the provision of examples, facts, anecdotes, and details appropriate to the target audience. ODE criterion: *The ideas are clear, focused, complete, and well-developed with specific details.*

2. **Organization.** This trait has to do with the structure of a written composition, including the writer's ability to hold the central meaning throughout the document. It focuses on how well the writer is able to organize information in a clear sequence and make connections and transitions among ideas, sentences, and paragraphs. ODE criterion: *The paper moves naturally from one idea to the next, with a strong beginning and ending.*

3. **Voice.** Here the writer demonstrates his or her unique quality of expression. Voice is closely allied to style, which is the manner in which the author expresses himself or herself. Style can be formal, casual, academic, or anecdotal. ODE criterion: *The writing style is lively and interesting and is appropriate to the audience and topic.*

4. **Word choice.** Mark Twain once said that the difference between a word and just the right word is like the difference between *lightning* and *lightning bug*. In relation to this trait, we evaluate the writer's use of words that are appropriate to the topic and audience, as well as her or his ability to convey the intended message and emotion. ODE criterion: *Words are carefully selected to convey precise meaning, images, and tone.*

5. **Sentence fluency.** This trait relates to the writer's understanding and application of the underlying structures of language. When read aloud, the writing should create a natural flow of language. ODE criterion: *Sentences are smooth, varied, and carefully constructed.*

6. **Conventions.** The sixth trait focuses on the writer's knowledge of spelling, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and penmanship—the mechanics of writing. ODE criterion: *Correct spelling, grammar, usage, punctuation, capitalization, and paragraphing are used throughout the paper.*

**Rubrics for Evaluation of the Six Traits.** Over the years, six trait scoring has been revised and marketed by various consultants and companies, each evidencing a unique twist on the popular model. Some evaluate each trait using a three-point, five-point, or six-point scale. We share with you in Figure 8.16 a six-point rubric derived from the one used by the Oregon Department of Education (n.d.).

Scoring six traits on six levels can be time-consuming for busy classroom teachers, so we have crafted an alternative three-level scoring for your consideration (see Figure 8.17).



Figure 8.16 Scoring Rubric for the Six Traits

Score	Evaluation	Description
6	Exemplary	The paper showed outstanding performance and exceptional control in this trait of writing.
5	Strong	The paper showed many strengths, and the writer seemed to be perfecting control of the writing.
4	Proficient	The paper showed more strengths than weaknesses, and the writer seemed to be gaining control of the writing.
3	Developing	The paper needs further development in this trait because the writer seemed only partially in control of the writing.
2	Emerging	The paper needs quite a bit more development, but the writer is addressing this writing trait.
1	Beginning	The paper needs significant development and represents a very beginning effort.

Figure 8.17 An Alternate Three-Level Scoring Rubric for the Six Traits

Score	Evaluation	Description
3	Proficient/Exemplary	Outstanding performance and exceptional control in this trait of writing.
2	Developing	Some evidence of the trait, but further development is needed.
1	Emergent	Represents little or no evidence of this trait.

## How Is the Writing Process Taught?

### Understanding the Writing Process

**Writing process** instruction teaches the kinds of thinking processes skilled writers use in producing different forms of text. As authors themselves, children are better able to learn from models of good writing how skillful writers paint pictures with words, how they choose words that convey just the right meaning, and craft sentences that grab the attention of readers. Through writing process instruction, children become wordsmiths and begin to enjoy the works of other authors on new and higher levels.

Writing instruction has changed significantly in recent years. Teachers once assigned students writing tasks such as preparing essays, reports, or research papers, expected students to submit one draft of their work, and then moved on to the next focus of study. Based on this "one-draft mentality" (Calkins, 1986), students learned that writing was a one-phase process that resulted in either success or failure. In recent years, researcher-practitioners like Donald Graves (1983) and his protégé Lucy Calkins (1994) have helped teachers (and students) understand that writing is a process rather than a one-time, "quick-and-dirty" project. Children are taught to understand and use the phases of authorship.



### Video Classroom

Visit an intermediate classroom beginning the writing process.

Observe 6th grade students as they begin the prewriting stage of the writing process. Access *Language Arts Videos-Video 1* in the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)). You may respond to accompanying questions that can be printed or sent directly to your instructor.

- As you view the clip, note the kinds of references available in the classroom and determine what types of reference material a teacher can expect students to use independently.
- How does the teacher review these process steps with them? What examples indicate independent application by the students?
- Do these references lead a writer toward opportunities for critical thinking and reflection? If so, how?

Writers do not move rigidly from one stage of writing to another. They sometimes move back and forth from one phase to another, or even quit in the middle of one writing project to start another.

It can be very instructive to examine the various stages through which writers progress in producing text. These stages have been identified as prewriting, drafting, revising and editing, and publishing. As teachers, we are in a position to help students learn these stages through our modeling, mini-lessons, and practice sessions.



"Kids in the News," explains how students in grades 5–8 research and write scripts for a school news program. Access the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)) Strategies and Lessons—Language Arts Methods/Writing.

**Prewriting Stage.** Prewriting is the getting-ready-to-write stage (Tompkins, 2004). Writing begins with an idea or message the writer wants to express. Many teachers help students begin the writing process by asking them to brainstorm a list of topics they might be interested in writing about at some point in the future. These should be topics that generate a certain amount of emotion in the student, as it is this emotional engagement that helps drive the entire writing process through to completion.

Donald Graves, in his classic *Writing: Teachers and Children at Work* (1983), suggests that teachers model each of the stages in the writing process to help students see adult examples. For this first step of brainstorming, the teacher might list at the overhead projector or chalkboard several topics that he or she is interested in writing about—sailing, collecting antiques, attending wrestling matches, or traveling to South Pacific islands. It is important that teachers explain to the class why each topic is appealing to them. A brainstorming session sometimes helps children who are having difficulty discovering topics of interest. The key to success is helping students find topics that generate emotion, which helps drive the entire writing process through to completion.

After students have selected an interesting topic, they gather information. This information-gathering may be simply recalling a special event in their life, or thinking about a favorite place, or trying to imagine what life might have been like before television. Depending on their purpose for writing, students may need to go to the library to gather information, surf the Internet for the latest news on their subject, interview people in their family or community, or write to local, state, or federal agencies.



Cooperative Groups research and write about a state history project to present in a newscast. Visit the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)) and select Strategies and Lessons—Language Arts Methods/Writing to read "State History Bites in the Morning News."



Once the student-writer has settled on a topic and collected useful support information, he or she is ready to begin organizing ideas for presentation—in short, to develop a plan for writing of some kind. This plan's form is relatively unimportant, but the writer should have some kind of organizational scheme for the composition.

This step helps make the piece clear, concise, and thorough. Several formats depicting the story theme "My Birthday Trip to Universal Studios," written by an intermediate student named Jina, are presented as examples in Figures 8.18 and 8.19.

Sometimes children have a difficult time getting started with their composition, or even coming up with an idea compelling enough to commit to paper. In this situation, it is usually helpful to engage in free writing. During **free writing**,

"Quick Writes and Quick Draws" provide students the opportunity to respond to literature in an impromptu setting. Learn more in *Strategies and Lessons—Reading Methods/Writing* at the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)).



Figure 8.18 Semantic Web

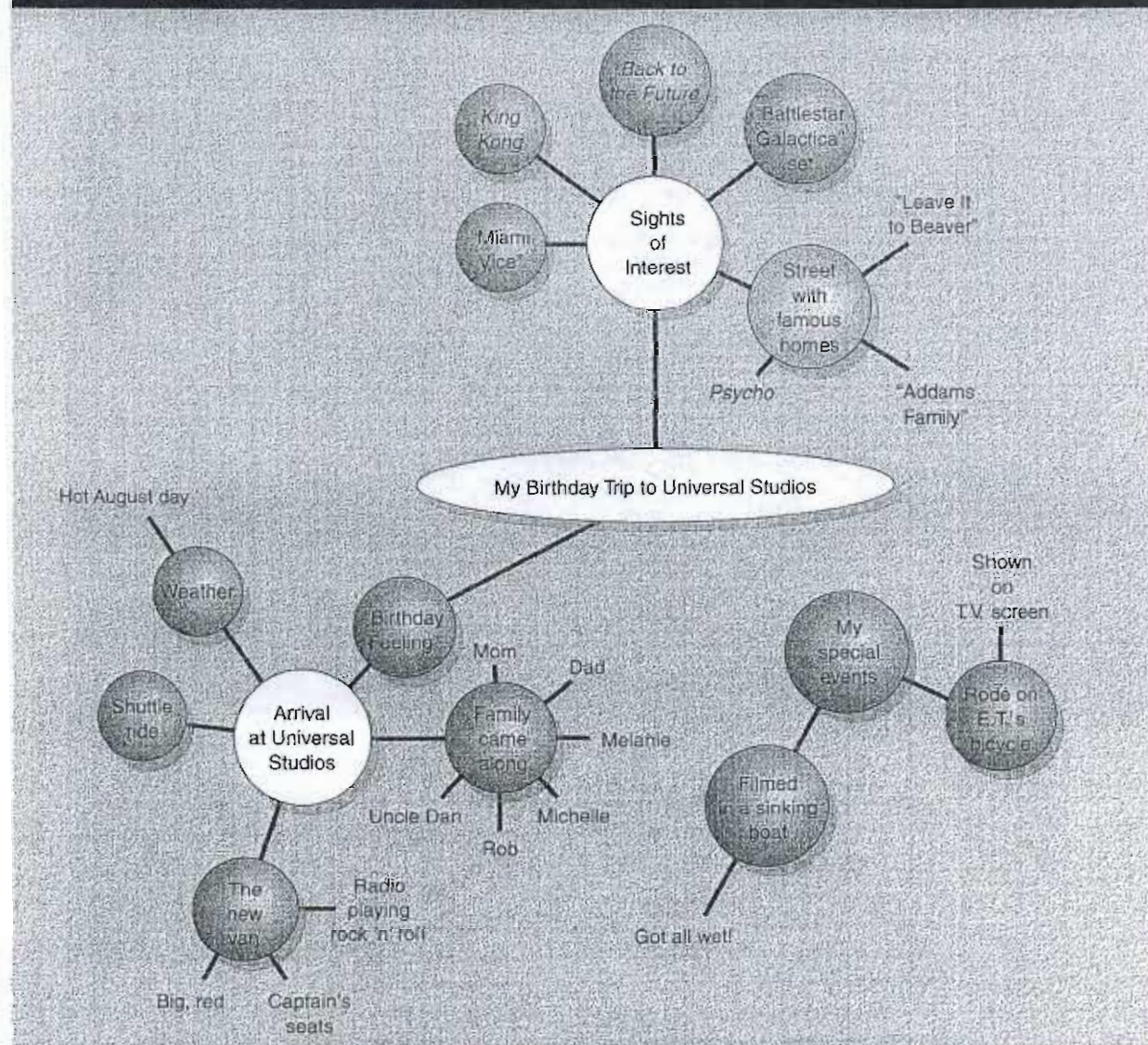
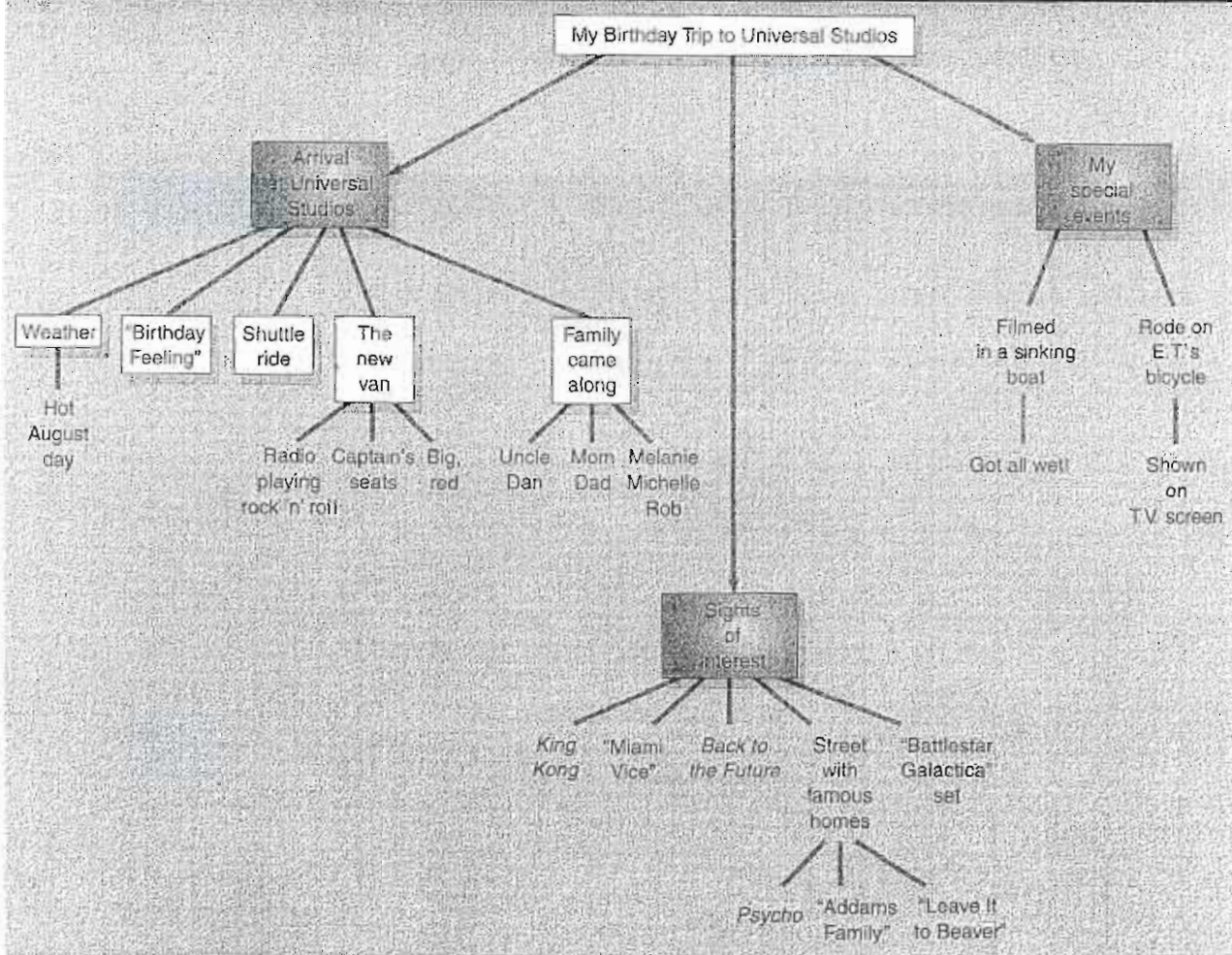




Figure 8.19 Structured Overview



students simply sit for a sustained period of time and write down anything at all that comes to mind. What often emerges is a rather rambling narrative with many idea fragments. Lucy Calkins (1986, 1994) suggests that children begin free writes by simply listing things in their immediate environment until they come to an idea they wish to write about. After students have an organized set of ideas about which to write and have constructed alternative leads, they are ready for the drafting stage.

**Drafting Stage.** The **drafting stage** represents an author's first attempt to get ideas down on paper. Teachers should emphasize that the most important part of drafting is simply getting thoughts down on paper, not mechanical correctness. A first draft is often referred to as "sloppy copy." Such fine points as verb tense, agreement, subject-verb or spelling correctness are *not* important at this stage. Rather, the expression of *ideas* is the paramount consideration. The following are useful tips for students as they draft:



- Write as though you were telling a story to an interested friend.
- Use your own "voice" instead of trying to sound like your favorite author.
- Use words that create a picture in the reader's mind. Your words should be descriptive and clear.
- Be sure to describe sights, sounds, smells, and other sensory images that are important parts of the story you want to tell.
- Say what you want to say directly. (*More* is not necessarily *better*. Sometimes *less* is *more* if words are chosen well.)

During the drafting process, the writer can create several opening sentences or *alternative leads* for his or her piece. Having an interesting beginning, one that grabs the reader, helps create a successful composition. For example, Jina might have begun her story like this:

On my birthday my family and I went to Universal Studios. It was a very fun day that I will never forget.

On the other hand, if Jina wrote several alternative leads, then picked the most exciting one to begin her story, perhaps she would come up with an introduction like this:

Imagine a birthday party with King Kong, E.T., and the stars from Miami Vice as your guests! That's exactly what happened to me on my 13th birthday. If you think that's something, hold on to your seat while I tell you the rest of my story.

Struggling students may have difficulty getting their ideas down on paper the first time they attempt to draft. Frequently their handwriting ability impedes the flow of their ideas. One solution is to have students dictate their story into a tape recorder and then transcribe the story onto paper later. This solution helps keep struggling students from becoming frustrated and improves their ability to transcribe a composition to paper. Another option is to allow students to dictate their story to an older student or a peer tutor. The advantage here is that the storyteller can get valuable and immediate feedback from the peer tutor, aiding in the clarity of the composition.



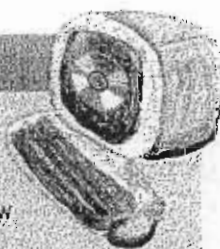
Ellen D. Senist/Allen Senist

## Video Classroom

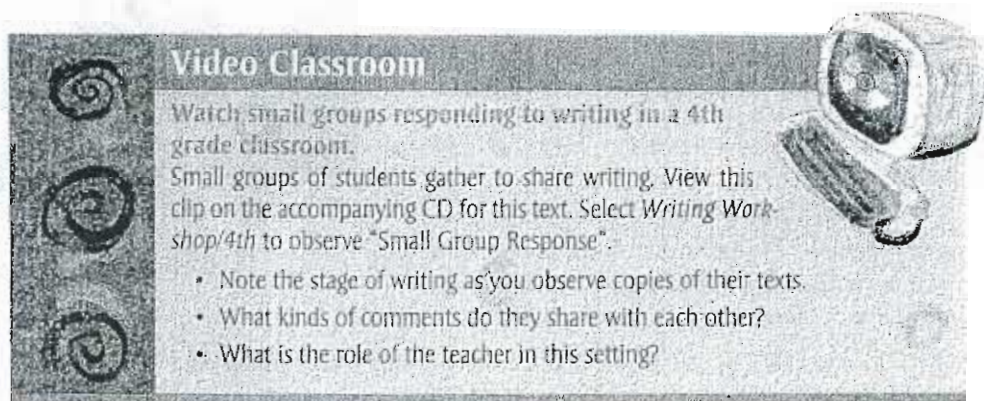
Visit a 4th grade classroom to see independent writing.

An independent writing area can be viewed on the accompanying CD to this text. Click on *Writing Workshop/4th* to view "Independent Writing," a writing workshop in action.

- Observe arrangements in the classroom, access to materials and references as you watch this video segment.
- Generate a list of ideas that you could use as you set up a writing workshop in your classroom.







### Video Classroom

Watch small groups responding to writing in a 4th grade classroom. Small groups of students gather to share writing. View this clip on the accompanying CD for this text. Select *Writing Workshop/4th* to observe "Small Group Response".

- Note the stage of writing as you observe copies of their texts.
- What kinds of comments do they share with each other?
- What is the role of the teacher in this setting?

**Revising and Editing.** Once the draft has been completed, the author is ready to begin the stages of revising and editing. **Revising**, or "re-visioning" (taking a second look), is changing the first draft to include new ideas—or perhaps to rearrange current ideas—to improve it. **Editing** is rereading the manuscript to find errors and omissions. This phase of the writing process is often a joint effort between the author and peer editors—often classmates—who offer constructive criticism.

The revision process can begin in many ways. Perhaps the most traditional method is the student-teacher writing conference, in which students meet with the teacher after she has read the composition. The teacher asks questions and offers suggestions for revisions. Some teachers like to use a form for recording their comments (see Figure 8.20).

Another option for helping students improve their compositions is **peer editing**. Many students prefer to get suggestions from their peers before the final publishing stage. Peer editing allows students to help each other in a collaborative and risk-free

**Figure 8.20** Writing Evaluation Form

Writing Evaluation Form			
Student Name _____		Date _____	
Title of Composition _____			
Overall Evaluation of the Composition: _____			
Underdeveloped	Partially Ready	Advanced	Excellent
Areas Needing Further Development			
_____ Character development		_____ Spelling	
_____ Setting		_____ Grammar	
_____ Conflict description		_____ Punctuation	
_____ Conflict resolution		_____ Capitalization	
_____ Story closure			



### Video Classroom

Watch how an editing conference with a teacher works.

Visit a video classroom in the *Reading Methods Section/Writing* of the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)) to observe an "Editing Conference With the Teacher". This video can also be accessed on the CD that accompanies this text in *Writing Workshop 4th*. Select "Individual Edit." Responses to the video classroom prompts may be printed or sent directly to your instructor.

- Observe a conference between a teacher and student and the use of an editing checklist.
- What indicators do you note that demonstrate how this conference is customized to match the student's level of writing development?

### Video Classroom

See how peer editing works in the 6th grade.

Students work together in a 6th grade classroom to peer edit. Access *Video Classroom* on the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)) and select *Language Arts/Writing* to view "Peer Editing." Responses to questions may be printed or sent directly to your instructor.

- How does peer editing support the idea of writing being a social activity?
- Why is peer editing helpful prior to meeting for an editing conference with the teacher?
- Based on your observations, think about the instruction that had to precede this lesson and which should follow.

environment. Though some students are able to work one-on-one with their peers successfully, peer editing is often more effective in small groups known as **teacherless writing teams** or **peer editing conferences**. Three to four students work together to produce their best work. At each stage of the writing process, students share their work with their team, and team members question the author and offer suggestions for improvement.

During the editing process, students check compositions for misspelled words, usage errors, poor sentence construction, missing topic sentences, awkward language, and coherence. Many teachers encourage students to use word banks (key word lists on the subject), a thesaurus, and a dictionary or the spelling and grammar checking features on word processing programs. Although some advocate the use of reference tools during the drafting stage, Calkins (1986, 1994) recommends reserving them for these final stages of the writing process.



**Figure 8.21 Proofreaders' Marks**

Text with Proofreader Markings	Explanation
Jamie carried the <sup>injured</sup> puppy home.	^ is for inserting missing words
Let's go to Mark's house <u>over</u> !	∩ for moving text
Let's go to Mark's house <del>over</del> .	∩ for marking out text

During the editing stage, writers use **proofreaders' marks**. These are notations that an author uses to add, delete, or rearrange information on manuscripts. Figure 8.21 features several examples of proofreaders's marks teachers might consider demonstrating to young writers.

Many schools now provide students with personal computers (PCs) for writing projects. These make the editing process both quick and relatively painless, but students must first learn keyboarding skills. Selected computer applications for assisting writing development are discussed in greater detail later in this chapter.

**Publishing.** A natural desire for most authors, young or seasoned, is to share their composition with an audience. For children, publishing can take many exciting forms. One publishing experience common in elementary classrooms is called the **author's chair**. Each day at a designated time, young authors who have completed a composition can sign up to share their most recent compositions in the author's chair. When the appointed time arrives, students take turns reading their creations to the class, answering questions about their story, and reaping generous applause. Other forms of publishing include letter writing to pen pals, school officials, favorite authors, and media stars, or making stories into classroom books, newspapers, and yearbooks. The key to success in publishing is that students feel their writing projects have an audience.

### Video Classroom

Watch more of the writing process as students share from the author's chair.

View students sharing writing with their classmates on the accompanying CD. Select *Writing Workshop 4th* to observe "Share For Class" where students share writing from the author's chair, before the final stage of publishing.

- Note the kinds of creations that are shared along with questions asked about the story.
- Why is this an important part of the writing process?





## Video Classroom

See the end of the writing process as students publish their works. "Final Presentation" on the accompanying CD gives you the opportunity to see a published text, complete with illustrations. Students return to the author's chair to read the final product in *Writing Workshop/4th*.

- How is this final presentation motivating for students involved in the writing process?
- What might happen to the book next as it becomes a part of the classroom?



"Mini-Lessons" give a teacher an opportunity to provide short, focused instruction to small groups of children. Find out ways to "boost" writing skills in your future classroom as you read this article in *Strategies and Lessons—Language Arts Methods/Writing* at the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherhprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherhprep)).



## How Do Interactive Writing Procedures Help Learners Acquire New Writing Skills?

In this section we discuss ideas that may be called **interactive writing** (Gipe, 2006). The idea is for the teacher to demonstrate new ideas about writing for learners in their zones of proximal development—ideas that bridge the reading and writing processes and help students grow in each language area. We begin with a very flexible method of writing instruction known as Writing Aloud, Writing To, followed by activities that fit nicely into this paradigm. Later, we describe other activities that make writing connections with books and other texts for students, followed by book-making ideas.

### Writing Aloud, Writing To: A Way of Structuring Your Teaching

In read-aloud activities, teachers share books orally with students and model such reading essentials as comprehension strategies and decoding skills. *Writing Aloud, Writing To* (Cooter, 2002; Gunning, 2006) is an adaptation of Routman's (1995) technique for getting students' attention and demonstrating various aspects of the writing process. *Writing Aloud, Writing To* has been used with great success in the Dallas Reading Plan, a massive teacher-education project in Texas, which resulted in significant improvement in student writing and reading achievement levels. The Writing To part of *Writing Aloud, Writing To* comes from the notion of writing to, with, and by: in a balanced program of writing instruction, teachers should engage daily in writing to students (demonstrations and mini-lessons), writing with students (guided practice sessions where students implement new writing skills with the help of the teacher or a more skilled peer), and writing by students (independent writing sessions where they practice their newly acquired skills).

The materials you will use depend greatly on the kinds of writing strategies you plan to model. In general, we like to use an overhead projector, transparencies, and erasable markers or a large tablet on an easel for writing demonstrations with groups. If the demonstration involves a computer, it is usually best to conduct *Writing Aloud, Writing To* sessions in small groups unless you have access to a computer projection system.

Create a lesson through the Teacher Prep Website



- You will be guided through the alignment of standards, lesson objectives, your introduction, planning for and sequencing lesson activities and procedures, planning for ongoing assessment throughout the lesson and planning end of lesson assessment. You will also choose and list *Lesson materials/resources* and create adapted instruction to meet all needs of students.
- This lesson can be sent to your instructor through this link.
- Select a children's book to feature in a "Writing Aloud, Writing To" lesson that will demonstrate a response to literature. Reference grade level information, rubric samples and developmental writing stages in this chapter as you prepare to "Think Aloud".
- Be sure to plan and record explicitly what you will model and say.

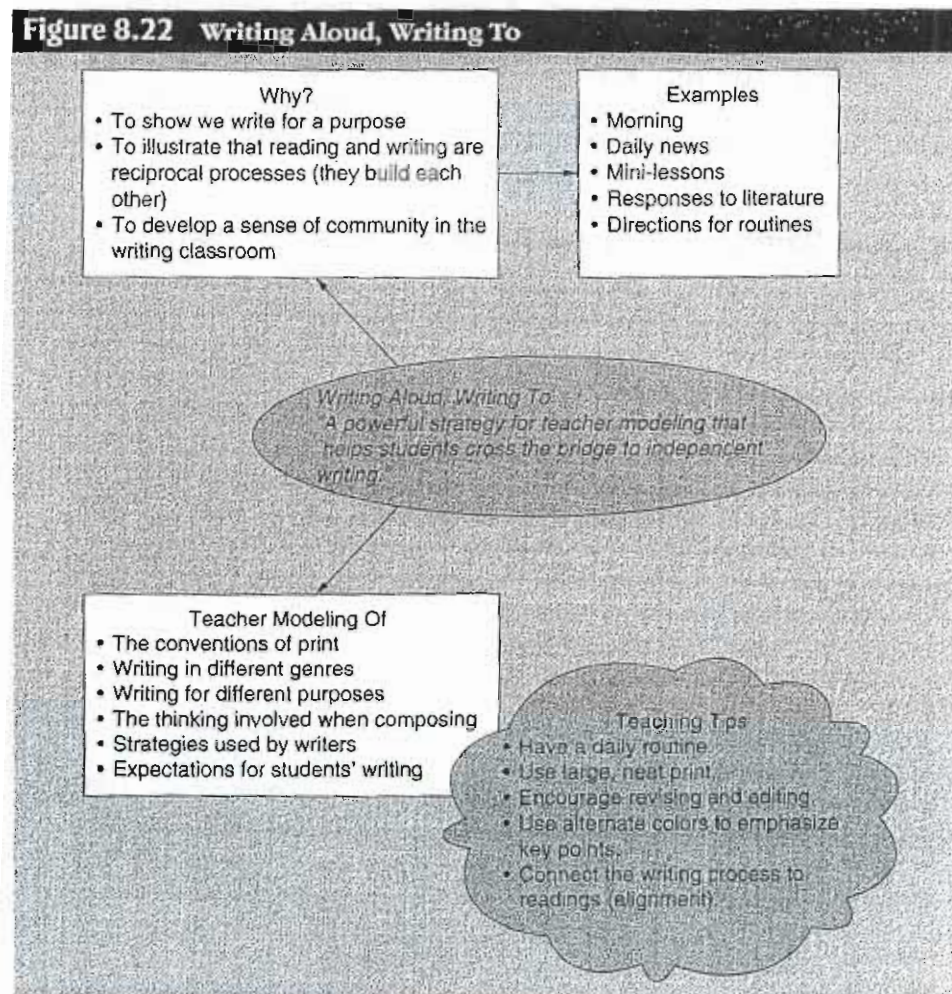


As with materials, the strategies you will employ will be based on the writing/reading connections you choose to emphasize. Routman (1995) and Cooter (2002) do, however, provide us with some useful tips.

- In *Writing Aloud, Writing To*, the teacher thinks aloud while writing in front of the students.
- Students watch the teacher as he writes and sometimes read aloud with the teacher as he says explicitly what he is doing. This may include the writer's thinking processes, format that has been chosen and why, layout of the piece, spacing, handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and discussion of vocabulary.
- Teachers help students relate the spoken word to the written word at all times.
- The teacher often asks questions that relate to the conventions of writing or features of text.

A graphic was prepared for the Dallas Reading Academy (Cooter, 2002) that summarizes key elements of *Writing Aloud, Writing To* based on the work of Regie Routman (1995). It is shown in Figure 8.22.

**Figure 8.22 Writing Aloud, Writing To**





**Shared Writing.** Shared writing is an opportunity for teachers and students to share the act of composing a piece of writing. Let's take a look at some highly effective ways teachers can "share the pencil" with children.

**Morning Message.** A morning message is brief, no more than two to six sentences on the level of students' ability to attend to and produce print (Payne & Schulman, 1998). Topics for the morning message are based on recent or upcoming school or class events and ideas or experiences individual students want to share. Typically, you, the teacher, will write the first sentence of the morning message. It might read, "Good morning, first grade! Today is \_\_\_\_" or "Wow! Yesterday was really special because \_\_\_\_." Leads such as this get students reading and thinking to start the day.

Next, read the first sentence of the morning message aloud to students. Then, while pointing, have students read it with you. Ask students if they have anything they would like to write to fill in the next part of the morning message. As children offer suggestions, ask them questions like, "What will we write first?" or "How many sounds do we hear in the first word? Let's clap and count the sounds." Sharing the message with students, write two to six sentences to complete the morning message.

In kindergarten and early first grade, some teachers prepare pictures to be used in place of words to keep the writing of the morning message moving along more quickly. But by grades 2–3, most students will be able to write their message quite quickly. Keep the editing tape handy so that you can fix mistakes in spelling, punctuation, and capitalization as you talk about them. Morning message provides a nice means of sharing the responsibilities for writing between students and teacher and is an ideal segue into interactive writing.

**Interactive Writing.** An interactive writing session focuses on the teacher writing *with* children—what is sometimes called "sharing the pen" (McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas, 1999). Teachers use interactive writing to:

- Connect reading and writing by using literature as a take-off point for writing reproductions, innovations, and new texts
- Help students develop increasingly sophisticated writing skills
- Demonstrate saying words slowly and connecting sounds in words to letters and letter combinations
- Expand students' repertoire of writing genres and forms
- Help children learn how the spelling process works

The subject and form of interactive writing may vary greatly depending on the developmental levels of the students and the context of experiences in the classroom. Typically in the early years, the teacher helps students write simple sentences. As students learn more about the writing process and different types of writing forms and genres, the teacher structures writing activities that become more complex.

**Conducting an Interactive Writing Lesson.** There is no one correct way to teach an interactive writing lesson, but based on the writings of McCarrier, Pinnell, & Fountas (1999), we recommend the following approaches:

1. In the early stages of writing, the teacher should help students compose a simple message drawn from literature or from the group's experiences. For example, consider this line from *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* (Carle, 1981):

#### Getting to Know English Learners

The Language Experience Approach is a perfect way for ELs to begin their "writing" experience as they can dictate in their first language (using a peer-buddy translator) or in English and therefore be included in class activities.





"On Monday, he ate through one apple." If the teacher asked children to innovate on what the caterpillar ate on Monday, a child might offer the following: "On Monday, he ate through one tomato." As the teacher asks students to replace text with new words, as she did in the example above, the entire message is reread from the beginning to help students remember how composing proceeds.

2. Teacher and students share the pen as a message is written word by word. When new words are added to a line of text, the children reread the line up to the added word. In the earliest stages of writing development, the teacher may write the word for students. With time and development, the teacher shares the pen, inviting children to contribute a letter, several letters, or an entire word.
3. Where appropriate, the teacher encourages the child to stretch the word and say it slowly to predict the letters by analyzing the sounds (see "word rubberbanding" in Chapter 4). Children may attempt any letter in the word in any order. Working within the child's zone of proximal development as Vygotsky (1962), the teacher fills in those letters that the child is unable to analyze on his own.
4. The teacher can construct a word wall, like that recommended by Cunningham (2000), which might be used as a writing resource for students. Words can be listed on the wall as "Words We Know and Can Write," "Words We Almost Know," and "Words We Need to Analyze and Write with Help."
5. As teachers and children write interactively, the teacher helps children learn directionality, punctuation, spaces, features of print, and capitalization. In this fashion, children learn the mechanics and the authoring processes necessary to produce high-quality writing products.

Interactive writing sessions typically last from 5 to 15 minutes, depending on the nature of the text to be produced. The goal of interactive writing is neat, legible, and sensible text.

### Organizing for Instruction: The Writing Workshop

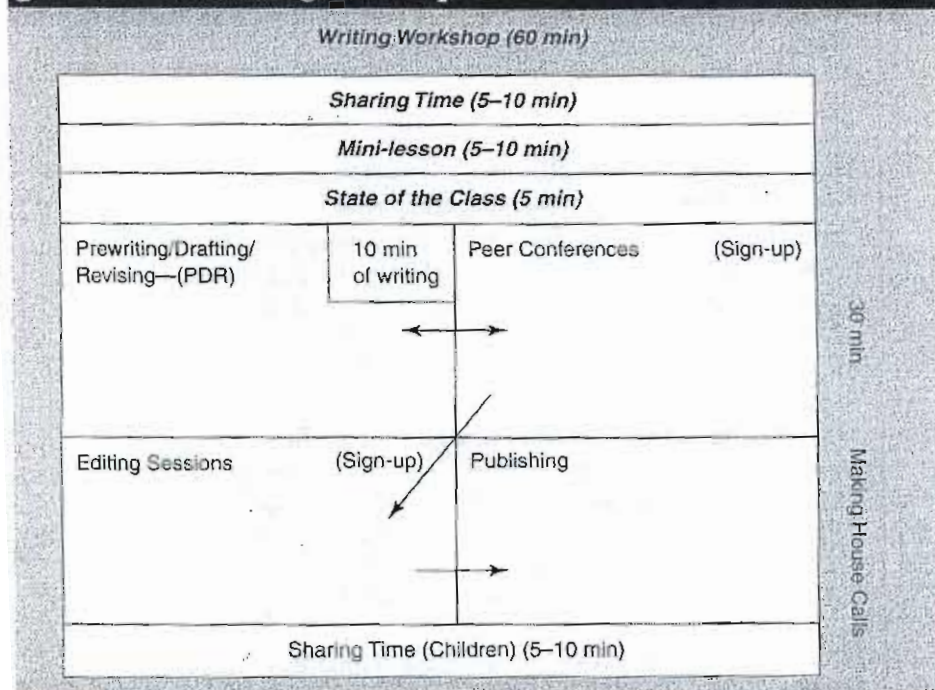
The **writing workshop** is an organizational structure for teaching composition skills that can be modified as needed. Instruction can be organized into five phases: teacher sharing time, mini-lesson, state of the class, workshop activities, and student sharing time. Figure 8.23 depicts the organizational scheme for the writing workshop.

**Phase 1: Teacher Sharing Time (5 to 10 minutes):** The purpose of teacher sharing time is to present students with language and experiences through writing that stimulate the natural energies of thinking (Holdaway, 1984). The substance of these teacher-led presentations is usually an assortment of brain-enticing poems, songs, stories, and exposition written by the teacher. The goal is to inspire students to strike out on new adventures in writing. This phase should be brief, perhaps 5 to 10 minutes, and should serve as a stimulating introduction to the rest of the writing period.

**Phase 2: Mini-Lesson (5 to 10 minutes):** The mini-lesson (Calkins, 1986, 1994), as is its counterpart in the reading workshop, is a brief time for teaching skills. Class discussions about such topics as selecting good ideas to write about, gathering reference materials, conducting interviews,



Figure 8.23 The Writing Workshop



organizing information, and publishing are all viable. Some examples of common mini-lesson topics suggested by Atwell (1987) are:

illustrations	narrative leads
essay writing	spelling
form	writing good fiction
mythology (Greek and Roman)	the dictionary
résumé writing	genre
writing conferences with yourself	job applications
correspondence	punctuation
focus	style
	writing short stories

Teachers usually share examples from their own writing or those volunteered by students during mini-lessons. The main focus of the mini-lesson at all grade levels is helping students write with quality at their stage of development.

**Phase 3: State of the Class (5 minutes):** The state-of-the-class phase of the writing workshop takes the same form as it does in the reading workshop: The teacher simply lists each student's name on the left side of a chart and students fill in the blanks for each day, indicating what they will be doing (e.g., drafting, peer conferencing, editing, publishing). Sometimes writing instructors, like Atwell, prefer to complete the state-of-the-class chart in the whole-class setting:

I think the [state-of-the-class] conference is worth three minutes of the whole class's time. I can't begin to know all the ways my students find ideas for writing, but I do know that eavesdropping is right up



there. When they make their plans public, writers naturally teach each other about new options for topic and genre. (Atwell, 1987, p. 90)

By recording students' plans for writing and saving them over the weeks of the school year, teachers can see almost at a glance who is failing to progress (Atwell, 1987). This phase of the writing workshop helps teachers set deadlines for key stages of the writing process with individual students, hold students accountable, and determine when "house calls" may be needed.

**Phase 4: Workshop Activities (30 minutes):** Four activities operate concurrently during the workshop activities phase: (1) prewriting, drafting, and revising; (2) peer conferencing; (3) editing (with the teacher or peers); and (4) preparing for publishing. Students sign up for one of these activities each day and work accordingly during the workshop period. It may be useful to distinguish between activities the teacher is engaged in versus those of the students.

For the teacher, several activities take place during this time. In the first 10 minutes or so of the writing workshop, teachers themselves engage in sustained silent writing (SSW). In working on a written product of their choice, teachers provide children with (a) models of positive writing behavior, and (b) writing samples for teacher sharing time. After SSW, the teacher is ready to move on to making individual "house calls" and working with students in private editing sessions.

Students largely move at their own pace during Writing Workshop activities and select from the four tasks identified earlier. If they choose to prewrite, draft, or revise, student might choose topics for narratives, gather resources and references, conduct interviews, create an outline for organizing their document, and eventually produce a draft.

Once students finish their first drafts, they are ready to sign up for a peer conference. During peer conferencing, small groups of students, usually three or four, read each other's first drafts and make recommendations for revisions. Peer conferences are sometimes known as "teacherless writing groups" because the teacher is not involved during this analysis phase unless invited by the group for consulting purposes.

Teachers have told us that some students learning the writing workshop system want to peer conference almost all the time. This can be problematic because a goal of comprehensive writing instruction is to promote peer collaboration and cooperation. One solution is to establish guidelines differentiating peer conferences from what might be termed "one-minute conferences." When students need a quick opinion about their composition, they can usually arrange a one-minute conference with a peer. Students should not require more than three one-minute conferences during a writing workshop session.

Group etiquette rules for student interactions should be established early in the school year to ensure maximum productivity and to minimize conflicts. Role-playing is one way to form group-developed rules. (Remember the teachers who made a videotape acting out positive and negative group behavior in the reading workshop section.) Students themselves also have no problem coming up with a list of their own group etiquette rules, which are applicable in all group experiences.



View an example of published writing in Language Arts

Artifacts—Module 2 on the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)). Select "Song of Myself" to learn more. You may respond to your instructor through this site.

- Think about how this artifact illustrates careful prewriting and brainstorming.
- How could this be used to model organizational structure and audience awareness?
- How does this artifact reflect the teacher's attention to self-esteem and motivation to write?



A word regarding classroom noise levels seems warranted. Whenever teachers begin to experiment with modes of instruction that allow students to work on their own or in small groups, the noise level will invariably go up. This may be distressing at first for some teachers, but this issue can be addressed. If the class becomes unruly, then appropriate steps must be taken to maintain class control. More often than not, however, the increase in classroom noise should be viewed as the sound of learning and creative interaction. Silvia Ashton-Warner (1963) refers to this kind of classroom hubbub as "peaceful noise" (p. 86).

Once the peer conference group meets and considers each students' manuscript, members make suggestions for improvement. Of course, authors are free to accept or reject their peers' suggestions. Manuscript revisions follow the peer conference, paving the way for an editing session with the teacher.

Editing sessions are special times for students to meet with the teacher to discuss their writing project and receive independent skill instruction or coaching. To take part in an editing session, students sign up the day before the conference and submit a copy of their writing project. This allows teachers time to read the composition and prepare notes for the student. Teachers should avoid writing directly on the composition. Instead, remarks should be made on a separate sheet of paper or a stick-on note to prevent defacing the project. When examining some narrative compositions, it may be a good idea to refer to a story grammar outline to make sure all-important elements have been included. Semantic and syntactic considerations should also be discussed.

After the editing session, students frequently need to edit or revise further before publishing. It may be desirable for the student and teacher to have an additional editing session to go over modifications before publishing. A visit to the publishing center to put the writing project into final form is the last stop.

One final point: Publishing does not necessarily happen with every writing project. Sometimes a student will say to the teacher, "I'm running out of interest for this story. May I work on another one?" Most writers occasionally run out of gas during a project and start a new one. Some may have several projects in process. It is not the number of publications a student produces during a given period that is important, but the process itself. Although it is desirable that students reach closure on a regular basis with writing projects, it does not have to happen every time.

**Phase 5: Sharing Time (5 to 10 minutes):** The Writing Workshop concludes with student sharing time or publishing. This period is for sharing and publishing completed writing projects. Students proceed to sharing time only with the approval of the teacher after an editing session.

Even students who may be publishing their writing project outside of class (e.g., putting their book in the school library or submitting their work to a children's magazine) should take part in sharing time. This allows other students to see and enjoy their finished product. The most common format for sharing time is the author's chair experience, where students sit before the group and share their composition.



Find out how the use of computer clip art motivates struggling readers along with providing them opportunities to use the computer. Access *Strategies and Lessons—Reading Methods/ Writing on the Teacher Prep Website* ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)) to read “Literacy and Computers.”

### Organizing for Instruction: The Writing Center

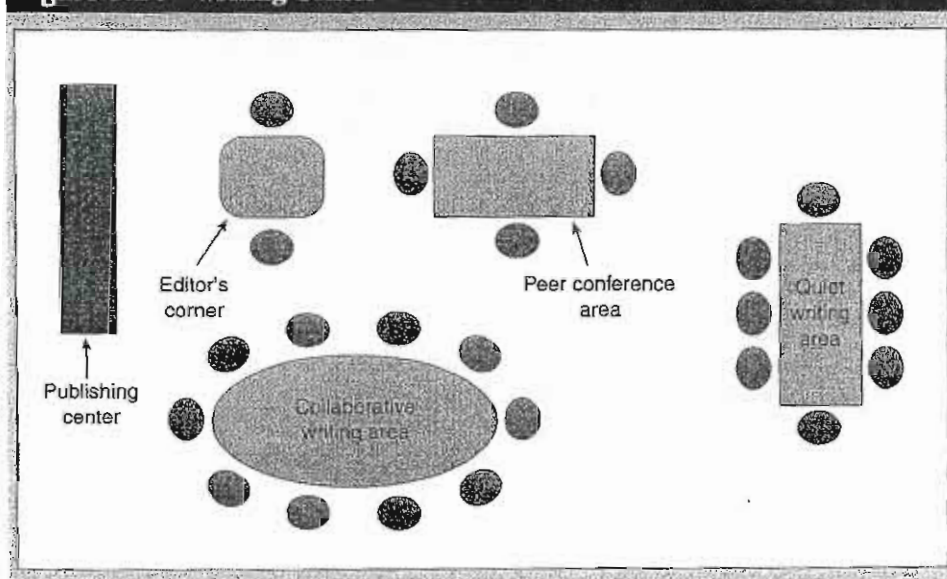
The **writing center** is an integral part of the Writing Workshop approach in the K–3 classroom. Because of the nature of the multiple activities occurring in the writing center, it should be located away from the quiet areas designated for silent sustained writing.

The writing center (see Figure 8.24) often includes three smaller integrated areas:

- Work area for collaborative writing projects, conferences, and editing
- Quiet area for silent sustained writing
- Publishing area with necessary supplies

As part of the writing area, a space for collaborative writing is designated for children to interact with teachers and peers about their writing projects—projects that may have been authored by individuals or groups or that may have been coauthored. A conference area with table and chairs or just a quiet carpeted corner can function as a location for conducting peer–student or teacher–student conferences about developing writing projects. An editing area can be located at a desk or table near the conference area. An older student, the teacher, or an adult volunteer can function as an editor for student-authored works in the classroom. An editor’s visor, printer’s apron, various writing and marking media, and a poster displaying editorial marks can be located here for the editor’s use. The publishing area should be stocked with pencils, pens, markers, staplers, and paper of various colors and sizes for covers. Materials also should be available for students to bind or publish their final writing products in a variety of ways. The location for each of the many supplies in this area can be indicated by a printed label or an outline of the object; doing so makes it easier for students to help in keeping the publishing area neat and tidy. Student works published in this area may take the form of big books, shape books, micro-books, accordion books, letters, notes, lists, posters, bulletin boards, and murals.

**Figure 8.24** Writing Center





## Classroom Computers and Writing Development

When teachers think of computers, word processing often comes to mind. **Word processing** is a general term that refers to the use of software programs that permit someone to write, edit, store, and print text (Strickland, Feeley, & Wepner, 1987, p. 13). In addition to standard word processing packages for elementary and upper elementary-age students, other related computer software programs are available that help students develop as writers.

Because computer software programs come and go so rapidly, it is very difficult to make specific recommendations. Professional publications in the literacy field, such as *The Reading Teacher*, *Reading Research and Instruction*, and *Language Arts* and product journals like *MacWorld* frequently feature product reviews that can help guide purchasing decisions. We offer only a brief sampling of writing programs that help students develop and extend their authoring abilities. *Bank Street Writer* is a pioneering effort that is both easy to use and affordable. It is suggested for grade 3 and up. *MacWrite* is the oldest text-processing program for the Macintosh computer and remains one that all Macs can open. Version 4.6 (or even 5), bundled with Mac computers to model SE, remains a very useful format, even with its size limit (*MacWrite 4.6* files cannot exceed 64 KB).

**IBM's *Writing to Read 2000*.** *Writing to Read 2000* is the next generation of IBM's landmark product, *Writing to Read*. It is a beginning reading-writing program based on a modified alphabet idea (one symbol for each of 42 language sounds) for kindergarten and first grade. It was developed by John Henry Martin, a retired teacher and school administrator. The typical routine, usually 30 to 40 minutes per day, takes children through a five-station rotation in a special computer lab. Students begin with the computer station, where they are taught to type 42 phonemes (representing English language sounds) using color images and synthesized speech. These lessons are repeated in a work journal. Then students listen to a tape-recorded story while following along in a book in the listening library. These activities are followed by a session in the typing-writing center, during which students can write compositions of their own choosing. The final center, where other reinforcement activities are practiced, is called "Make Words."

*Writing to Read 2000* includes a component called the "Computer Center," where "cycle words" teach young children sound/letter relationships. Four other centers support and encourage children to practice these associations using a variety of activities, including work journals, manipulatives, books, and writing. Other components of the new program follow:

- a writing/typing center program called *Write Along*
- graphical menus, audio support, and mouse, enabling easy and independent navigation for young students
- context rhymes that introduce "cycle words"
- teacher options, which include bookmaking, partner support, student management, and reporting information
- a *Writing to Read 2000* Game Board and assortment of games, puzzles, and manipulatives
- a collection of 23 age-appropriate children's literature books, 16 accompanied by natural, expressive voice cassette recordings
- a teacher's guide that provides cross-curricular connections, curriculum integration, and thematic unit suggestions

## The First Six Weeks of Writing Instruction

From the first day of school, you must show students that you consider them to be competent writers (albeit, at their own stage of development). In this section, we offer some general guidelines for structuring writing instruction for the first six weeks of school.



### Getting to Know English Learners

During the first week of writing instruction with your ELs, try to get a writing sample from each student. Here are a few questions that will guide your assessment and help you to know whether or not you need to seek outside assistance.

1. What is EL's native language?
2. Does your EL student's language use the Greek alphabet like English or another system? How is that system different?
3. Does your EL student read in her first language? Does she write in her first language?
4. Can your EL student write in English?
5. If not, can your EL student dictate in English so you may write for her?
6. If not, can your EL student draw a picture to accompany a story you read aloud to the class or one she prefers to "talk about."

Now, if necessary, you can work with your school's ESL or English Language Arts teacher and capable peer reading/writing buddies to modify your writing instruction for your ELs.

**Week 1.** Writing and reading are reciprocal processes and should be started at the same time. In order to get a sense of momentum established right away, do the following.

- Introduce writing mini-lessons working with the whole group. Mini-lessons could focus on selecting appropriate topics, using graphic organizers, crafting opening sentences (leads), and learning the conventions of writing.
- Make in-class writing assignments to help you begin the assessment process.
- Introduce students to the writing center, the variety of tools available there, and their purposes/correct uses.
- Introduce students to the writer's notebook concept and have them begin making entries.

### Weeks 2 and 3

- Introduce students to the notion of using a "writer's notebook" for gathering such things as brainstorming ideas, completed graphic organizers, "sloppy copy" first drafts, and so forth. This can take the form of a pocket folder, a file folder kept in an easily-accessable storage unit, or a tabbed three-ring binder.
- Explain how student writing folders are to be used to store work.
- Introduce the rudiments of letter writing and have students use that format to write a letter to a friend or family member.

### Weeks 4 Through 6

- Conduct mini-lessons in small- and large-group settings, focusing primarily on revising and editing fundamentals.
- Post and discuss numerous writing models for each stage of the writing process that meet curriculum or state assessment requirements for best-quality work. Students need to see examples of competent work to understand the expectations.
- Conference with two to three students per day about the progress of their work using work samples in their writing folders.
- Conduct small- and whole-group guided writing sessions.
- Introduce writing backpacks as homework assignments that involve parents.
- If adult volunteers are available, begin to assign them to struggling writers to assist in specific areas of need. You must first train the volunteers on writing activities they can deliver, then match them to students having that particular need.



Primary children prepare to write written descriptions and they plan through webbing. Read more in "Writing Through Webbing for Elementary Students" on the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)) in *Strategies and Lessons—Reading Methods/Writing*.

## How Can We Adapt Writing Instruction to Meet the Needs of All Learners?

We have recently discovered two novel approaches for helping struggling readers and writers. The first is a revision of the K-W-L strategy by Ogle (1986), and the second has to do with online technologies.



## Reading and Analyzing Nonfiction (RAN) Strategy

Tony Stead (2001, 2006), an Australian teacher, points out that some 85 percent of all reading that we do as adults is nonfiction or informative in nature, but most of what we deal with in K-3 classrooms is personal narrative or fiction. We strongly believe that all learners, and especially struggling readers and writers, can benefit from an increased diet of nonfiction reading and writing activities. Not only that, children truly enjoy expository texts! These activities can help children do the following:

- ✓ Increase their concept knowledge and vocabulary
- ✓ Learn important research skills using a variety of tools
- ✓ Develop cooperative learning abilities
- ✓ Learn the writing patterns and styles used by authors in constructing informational texts

Stead (2006) explains that good learning with expository/informational texts has students talking, listening, seeing, exploring, questioning, observing, and sharing. In the **reading and analyzing nonfiction strategy (RAN)**, Stead has produced innovations on the popular K-W-L strategy (Ogle, 1986) to promote small group, interactive learning. Featured in Figure 8.25 is an example of our interpretation of Stead's RAN model completed by a group of students beginning a study of *arachnids* (spiders).

With the RAN strategy learners begin by working with a team of students to list what they *think* they know about the subject. This creates an implicit understanding in the learner's mind that some of what they think they know may not be true, and that it is okay to have some knowledge that is not accurate.

The second part of RAN has students looking for information about the subject—researching. Stead (2006) explains that information resources must be pre-selected by the teacher to ensure that students do not become frustrated in trying to locate information or lose precious time reading unrelated or unreliable sources. After the team's research is completed, they compile what they have learned in the columns labeled "Information We Have Confirmed" and "New Information and Facts We Have Learned." In doing this, students give evidence that they recognize the validity of some of their previous knowledge and can articulate their new knowledge. In the next column of the summary form, students list misconceptions about the topic they have debunked as a result of their research.

The final column of the RAN Team Learning Form is directed toward what the learners still wonder about. For the topic of spiders, learners may wonder how they can tell which spiders are poisonous, or which spiders can be found in their home town. If they are learning about zebras, they might wonder if the stripes are as different as fingerprints in humans. This "wondering" column is driven by students' research, and frequently results in higher levels of learning and comprehension.

**Using RAN to Help Students Transition to Written Summaries.** RAN can be quite useful as a Prewriting tool. To help students use RAN to move into the Drafting stage of writing, teachers must provide direct and explicit modeling examples.

For teacher "think-aloud" modeling, it may be helpful to use a graphic organizer like the one recommended in the *Memphis Striving Readers Project* called **Structure**

English Learners can use wordless picture books to help them predict and develop vocabulary. They can "read" the book in their own languages and then create a story. Read more in "Generating Stories" in *Language Arts Methods/Writing* on the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep))



Children can write their own nursery rhymes individually or as a group in Inclusive classrooms. Visit the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)) and select *Strategies and Methods—Language Arts Methods/Writing* to read "Rhyming Time" for grades K-4 & L.D. students.



Scott Cunningham/Merrill



Figure 8.25 Reading and Analyzing Nonfiction (RAN) Team Learning Form: *Arachnids* Example

What We Think We Know About This Topic	Information We Have Confirmed	New Information and Facts We Have Learned	Some Misconceptions We Have Learned About This Topic	We Now Wonder...
<p>They're scary.</p> <p>We think there is a song about an Eensy Weensy spider</p> <p>My cousin says to stay away from them 'cause they'll hurt you</p> <p>They kill people every now and then</p> <p>All spiders are poisonous</p> <p>The biggest spider is as big as a cat</p>	<p>Songs about spiders we found in the Internet: Eensy Weensy Spider, Spider Dance, Busy Spider, Four Little Spiders</p> <p>Most spiders carry venom to stun or kill creatures they want to eat, not to hurt humans.</p> <p>Of all spiders only about 25 are thought to have venom that can hurt humans. Not all spiders are poisonous.</p> <p>Two venomous spiders in the U.S. are the black widow and brown recluse—but they have not been proven to kill people in more than 20 years.</p> <p>The biggest spider is the Goliath birdeater tarantula. It is found in the rain forests of northeastern South America, and can be as big as a dinner plate. It can grab birds from their nests! The smallest spider is from Borneo and is the size of a pinhead.</p>	<p>The scientific name for spiders is arachnids.</p> <p>There are 37,000 species of arachnids.</p> <p>Some spiders eat insects we don't like such as flies and mosquitoes. Others eat frogs, fish, lizards, and snakes.</p>	<p>Some people think spiders have hair, so they must be mammals. Spiders are not mammals, they are insects.</p> <p>Some think spiders kill people, but no one has died from a spider bite in 20 years.</p> <p>All spiders eat bugs—not true. Some eat animals.</p> <p>Some people think there are spiders that are as big as a cat, or even bigger. This is not true since the biggest spider is the size of a dinner plate.</p>	<p>What is the biggest spider in North America, since we live there?</p> <p>What is the strongest kind of silk made by spiders?</p> <p>Can you make clothes out of spider silk?</p> <p>Do any spiders live under water?</p> <p>Where did the name "arachnid" come from?</p>

Free Online Sources for Teachers and Children:

\*Adapted from *National Geographic News*. *Spider Sense: Fast Facts on Extreme Arachnids*. (n.d.). Retrieved March 31, 2007, from [http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/06/0623\\_040623\\_spiderfacts.html](http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2004/06/0623_040623_spiderfacts.html).

\*\*Titles from Music & Rhyme Station: Spider songs and rhymes. (n.d.). Retrieved March 31, 2007, from [http://www.preschoolexpress.com/music\\_station03/music\\_station\\_act03.shtml](http://www.preschoolexpress.com/music_station03/music_station_act03.shtml). Full text and tunes listed.

for **Written Retellings** or **SWR** (K. S. Cooter, 2006) as seen in Figure 8.26. A completed version of the SWR is shown in Figure 8.27 in which the teacher has demonstrated how information gathered using RAN could be transposed onto the **Structure for Written Retellings (SWR)** graphic organizer to create a first draft of a summary paper. (Note: In modeling, teachers should use alternative examples of previously learned material cast in the RAN format since it is the *process*, not the content, that



being emphasized.) Some Internet sites related to writing you and your young techno-experts might investigate follow:

Wikipedia [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page)  
National Geographic's Kids News <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/kids/>

Figure 8.26 Structure for Written Retellings (K. S. Cofer, 2007)

Introduction

Topic #1 (from graphic organizer)

Supporting details

Concluding sentence

Topic #2 (from graphic organizer)

Supporting details

Concluding sentence

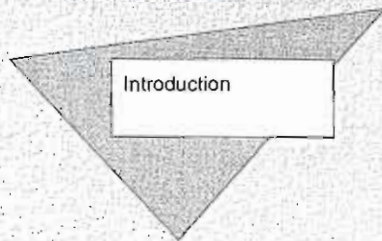
Topic #3 (from graphic organizer)

Supporting details

Concluding sentence

Conclusion



Figure 8.27 Example of a Completed Structure for Written Retellings on *Arachnids*

## Introduction

Spiders are very interesting creatures, and are even scary to some people. The scientific name for spiders is "arachnids," and they are insects. There are 37,000 kinds of spiders. There are even songs about spiders we learn in school. In this report we will learn facts and misconceptions about this special living thing we learned in our book and on the Internet.

## Topic #1 (from graphic organizer)

Supporting details

Concluding sentence

One misconception is that all spiders are poisonous. Some spiders are poisonous, or "venomous," but not all spiders have venom. Spiders use venom to stun or kill creatures they want to eat. Of over 37,000 kinds of spiders, only about 25 have venom that can hurt humans. Two spiders in the U.S. with venom that can hurt humans are the black widow and the brown recluse, but no one has been proven killed in over two decades (20 years).

## Topic #2 (from graphic organizer)

Supporting details

Concluding sentence

Another misconception is that some spiders can be larger than a cat. Spiders come in many sizes. The largest is the Goliath birdeater tarantula. It is found in the rain forests of northeastern South America, and can be as big as a dinner plate. It can grab birds from their nests! The smallest spider is from Borneo and is the size of a pinhead. So, there are no spiders larger than a cat, but they can be very large and also very small.

## Topic #3 (from graphic organizer)

Supporting details

Concluding sentence

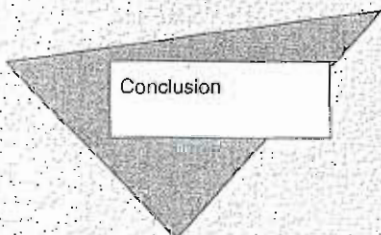
One thing we learned is that different arachnids eat different things. Many spiders eat insects, but not all do. There are spiders who dine on birds, frogs, fish, lizards, and snakes. So it is not true that all spiders eat bugs!

## Topic #3 (from graphic organizer)

Supporting details

Concluding sentence

There are other things about arachnids, or spiders, that we still do not know. What is the largest spider in North America? Is it as big as the Goliath birdeater tarantula? We hope not. Also, is the silk spiders make all the same kind? How strong is their silk? Could you make clothes out of spider silk? We wonder where the name "arachnid" came from? And what about water spiders? Do any of them actually live under water? We still have a lot to learn about arachnids.



## Conclusion

Spiders, or arachnids, are very interesting insects. They come in many sizes, live on different things, and some are poisonous. We want to know more about this special creature.



USGS Learning Web	<a href="http://interactive2.usgs.gov/learningweb/students/">http://interactive2.usgs.gov/learningweb/students/</a>
Smithsonian Education	<a href="http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/">http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/</a>
PBS Kids	<a href="http://pbskids.org/">http://pbskids.org/</a>
Oz Projects	<a href="http://www.ozprojects.edna.edu.au/sibling/home">http://www.ozprojects.edna.edu.au/sibling/home</a>
Grassroots	<a href="http://www.schoolnet.ca/grassroots/e/home/index.asp">http://www.schoolnet.ca/grassroots/e/home/index.asp</a>
Starfall	<a href="http://www.starfall.com/">http://www.starfall.com/</a>
Funbrain	<a href="http://www.funbrain.com/">http://www.funbrain.com/</a>

## What Is a Proven Strategy for Involving Parents in Writing Instruction?

### Traveling Tales Backpack

I have used the **traveling tales backpack** (Reutzel & Fawson, 1990; Reutzel & Fawson, 1998; Yellin & Blake, 1994) strategy to involve parents and children in collaborative writing projects. A traveling tales backpack (see Figure 8.28) is filled with writing media and guidelines for parents to work with their children at home in producing a self-selected writing project.

The backpack is sent home with the student for two nights. To maximize involvement and success, parents are contacted by phone or note before the backpack is sent home. Parents and children can choose a variety of ways to respond to their favorite book: They can write shape stories, pocketbooks, accordion books, or cards. Included in the traveling tales backpack is a letter (Figure 8.29) to parents with guidelines on how to engage their child in the writing process.

After completing the writing project together, parent and child are invited to share their work with the class in the author's chair at school. After sharing, the written product is placed on display for students to read and enjoy.

"Plentiful Penguins," located in the Teacher Prep Website ([www.prenhall.com/teacherprep](http://www.prenhall.com/teacherprep)) will provide you with ideas for including parents in your units. Find out more in *Strategies and Methods—Language Arts Methods/Writing*.



Figure 8.28 Traveling Tales Backpack

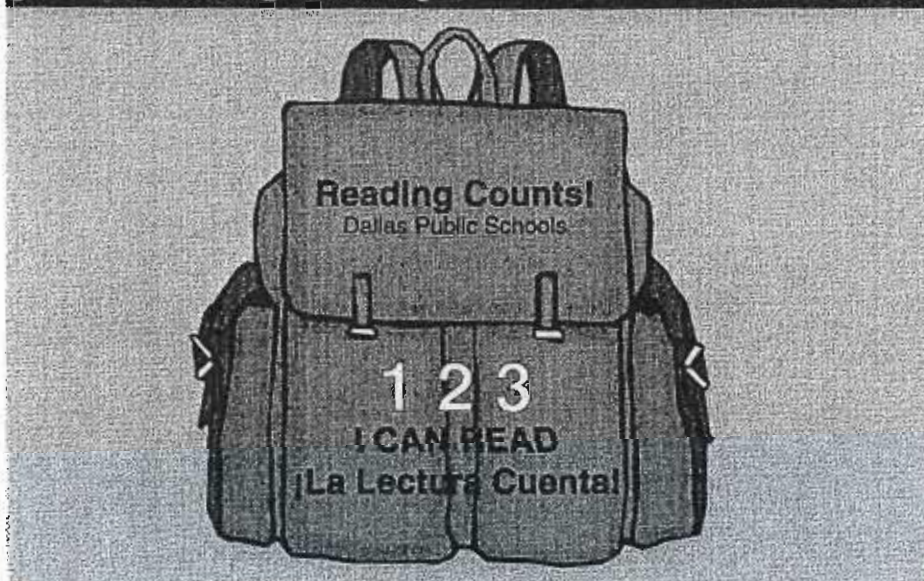




Figure 8.29 Traveling Tales Parent Letter

Dear Parent(s):

Writing activities provided at home can have a great influence on your child's reading and writing development. Traveling Tales is a backpack that includes a variety of writing materials for use by you and your child. As per our conversation, we encourage you to work together cooperatively with your child to create a story that will be shared at school. *Please avoid competition or trying to outdo others.*

Your child has been given this backpack for two nights. If you need more time, please call us at XXX-XXXX. Otherwise, we will be looking forward to you and your child returning the Traveling Tales backpack in two days.

We would like to suggest some guidelines that may help you have a successful and enjoyable Traveling Tales experience with your child:

1. Help your child brainstorm a list of ideas or topics by asking questions that will invite him or her to express ideas, interests, feelings, etc., about which he or she may wish to write. Stories about personal experiences (factual or fictional), information stories that tell of an area that your child finds interesting, biographies of family members or others, and stories of science or history are possible topics.
2. After selecting a topic, help your child decide which of the writing materials included in the Traveling Tales backpack he or she will need to use to create his or her story. Suggest that the story may take several different forms. Some ideas include (1) poetry, (2) fold-out books, (3) puppet plays, (4) pocket books, (5) backward books, and (6) shape books.
3. Help your child think through or rehearse the story before beginning writing. You may wish to write down some of the ideas your child expresses for him or her to use in writing the first draft.
4. Remember, your child's first draft is a rough draft. It may contain misspellings, poor handwriting, and incomplete ideas. This should be expected. Be available to answer questions as your child works on the first draft. Be careful to encourage him or her to keep writing and not worry about spelling, punctuation, etc. Tell him or her to just do his or her best and both of you can work on correctness later. *This is the idea development stage of writing.*
5. Once the first draft is completed, try to involve others in the household by asking them to listen to the first draft read aloud. Reading one's writing aloud helps writers determine the sensibleness of the message. Be sure to tell those who are invited to listen to be encouraging rather than critical. Ask questions about ideas that were unclear or were poorly developed. Questions help a writer think about his or her writing without feeling defensive.
6. Write down the questions and suggestions made by the home audience. Talk with your child about how a second draft could use these suggestions to make the story easier to understand or more exciting. Remember to be supportive and encouraging! Offer your help, but encourage your child to make his or her best efforts first.
7. After the second draft is completed, your child may wish to read his or her writing to the family group again. If so, encourage it. If not, it is time to edit the writing. Now is the time to correct spellings, punctuation, etc. Praise your child for his or her attempts and tell him or her you want to help make his or her writing the best it can be. Show your child which words are misspelled and why. Do the same with punctuation and capitalization.
8. With the editing complete, the writing is ready to be revised for the final time. When your child writes the final draft, encourage him or her to use neat handwriting as a courtesy to the reader. Feel free to help your child at any point as he or she makes final revisions.
9. Once finished, encourage the members of your family or household to listen to the final story. This practice will instill confidence in your child as he or she shares his or her writing at school.
10. We cordially invite you to come to school with your child, if possible, to share the writing you have done together. Your child will appreciate the support, and we would like to talk with you.

Thank you for your help. We appreciate your involvement. If you have an interesting or special experience and are unable to come to school with your child, we would appreciate hearing about these. Please call us or send a note with your child. We will be glad to call back or visit with you. Thanks again for your support. We hope you enjoyed your experiences!

From "Traveling Tales: Connecting Parents and Children in Writing," by D. R. Reutzel and P. C. Fawson, 1990, *The Reading Teacher*, 44, pp. 222-227. Copyright 1990 by the International Reading Association. Reprinted by permission of D. Ray Reutzel and the International Reading Association.